Management in Government

May 1983 Volume 38 Number 2

Management in Government

incorporating

Management Services in Government

Produced by the Management and Personnel Office in collaboration with Her Majesty's Treasury and other departments and published quarterly by Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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First published 1983

ISBN 0 01 722716 1
ISSN 0263-4678

Front cover: Sir Donald Maitland.

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They Only Fade Away

Sir Donald Maitland GCMG OBE

Sir Donald Maitland GCMG OBE served from 1941 to 1947 in The Royal Scots and with the Rajputana Rifles—in India, the Middle East and South East Asia—and then joined the Foreign Service. After a distinguished career in that Service, he became Permanent Under-Secretary of State of the Department of Energy in 1980 from which post he retired at the end of 1982.

The changes which have taken place at the top of several government departments over the past year have marked the departure from Whitehall of the last—and the youngest—of the wartime generation. This has been described as the end of an era. Like many a good headline that is probably an exaggeration. Yet those of us who belong to that generation shared a range of experiences which cannot have failed to influence our outlook and attitudes. The lives and well-being of all sorts and conditions of men were placed in our care; and so we discovered responsibility. We were associated with this country's success when it stood alone against great danger; and so we came to realise how much could be achieved through national unity. But later we recognised that this, magnificent though it was, did not compare with the possibilities of international action, which seemed limitless. If we were exalted by these revelations, how much more were we humbled by what we saw of human wretchedness.

These were amongst the major conclusions to be drawn from the wartime experience. On a practical level there were other less grand lessons to be learned. I can speak only for myself; but I have always considered the impact of the years I spent in the army on what the French felicitously call my 'formation' far more important than school or university. I believe most of my contemporaries would agree.

In saying this I do not have in mind those particular episodes ranging from the unspeakable to the unforgettable which are woven into the intimate pattern of our personal experience, but rather what flowed from membership of an enormous and remarkably well-run organisation. An example will illustrate the point. The training of junior officers was for the most part straightforward, systematic and logical. We were told, for instance, that before we could determine which 'battle drill' to apply we had to 'appreciate' the situation. Whether mental or written this appreciation had to follow a set sequence. First, the object to be achieved.

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Secondly, the factors affecting the attainment of this object; these were to include the relative strengths of the enemy's forces and our own, the terrain, the amount of time and space available, the weather, the light, and so on. Then, the courses open to our own troops and to the enemy's. And finally, the plan.

In due time and with much practice this procedure became instinctive, and ever since I have found it awkward to discuss a problem unless the object to be achieved is clear. This statement may seem so obvious as to be superfluous; but the fact is that I have had to participate in too many discussions when the object has not been defined. In the late 1970s it was agreed that London's instructions to the United Kingdom Representation at Brussels (called UKREP for convenience) for meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Special Committee on Agriculture and working groups should begin by stating the United Kingdom's objective on the matter at issue, and then go on to set out the 'line to take' and the background information and relevant considerations. One of the first instructions in the new format began as follows: 'Objective: to consider the Commission's proposal'. After such a discouraging start things could only improve, and before long the care taken at the London end over defining our objectives began to prove its worth. At the Brussels end we often felt that a precisely stated objective was all that we needed by way of instruction to achieve the desired result in the ensuing debate. The best instruction I ever received was conveyed to me when I was at the United Nations in New York. On the day the Yom Kippur War broke out in 1973 the Under Secretary in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for the United Nations and the Middle East telephoned to say that he had just left a meeting with the Foreign Secretary who gave me 'authority to work for a cease-fire'. No ambassador could ask for more clarity or wider discretion.

The wartime training of junior officers was not of course confined to appreciations, the issuing of orders and battle drills, not to mention the obligatory square-bashing. A certain amount of time was devoted to something I had not heard of until then. This was 'man management', and the centre piece was a series of lectures on the subject delivered by, as it seemed to us, a rather elderly captain. But, as before, the argument was developed in plain language and in logical sequence. We were told that our relationship with our men was as important to the general efficiency of our forces as training, discipline and administration, and that the right relationship had to be based on mutual confidence and respect. To achieve this various suggestions were put forward—we should, for instance, give our men a sense of unity; we should put their interests first; we should explain things to them; and we should be their champion. And more in the same vein. I will not forget one particular moment during this course of

lectures when the scepticism with which we had listened to the elderly captain at the beginning seemed suddenly to evaporate as we recognised the religious content in the advice he was offering us.

As a supplement to this part of our training course we were encouraged to read three lectures which General Wavell had delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1939 and which had been issued as a booklet entitled *Generals and Generalship** at the time of his victory over the Italian armies in North Africa in 1941. Wavell began by quoting what he regarded as the only apt exposition of the qualities necessary for a general which he had encountered in his researches. This read as follows:

> 'The general must know how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed for war. He must have imagination to originate plans, practical sense and energy to carry them through. He must be observant, untiring, shrewd; kindly and cruel; simple and crafty; a watchman and a robber; lavish and miserly; generous and stingy; rash and conservative. All these and many other qualities, natural and acquired, he must have. He should also, as a matter of course, know his tactics; for a disorderly mob is no more an army than a heap of building materials is a house.'

Wavell went on to remark that what attracted him about the way this was expressed was that Socrates—for it was none other—gave pride of place to administration, which Wavell himself regarded as the real crux of generalship. But it was not long before Wavell in his lectures brought us back to man management. The general, he argued, should never let his staff get between him and his troops. 'What troops and subordinate commanders appreciate' he said, 'is that a general should be constantly in personal contact with them, and should not see everything simply through the eyes of his staff'.

Advice for junior officers was proffered at lower levels, and needless to say much of this was thoroughly practical. Two pearls of wisdom from our Glaswegian sergeant instructor have stuck in my mind. The first—a warning which fortunately turned out to be superfluous—related to mustard gas: 'Wi this respirator ye'll be a' right. But if ye get it on your genial organs—aw Jings'. The second was yet another addition to the canons of man management: 'Ye've gotta cater for the BF in every section'.

As always, experience was a reliable if exigent tutor. When I left the army I took with me certain clear notions about the analysis of problems, about the use of time, about the setting of priorities, about communication and about human relationships which I have had no occasion to discard.

* * *

**Generals and Generalship* by General A P Wavell, Penguin, 1941.

The day after leaving the army in 1947 I began work in a cubicle on the third floor of what was then the Foreign Office. I spent thirty of the subsequent years in the Foreign (later the Diplomatic) Service.

At various times some kind of merger—total or partial—of the Home Civil Service and the Diplomatic Service has been advocated. Change is to be welcomed when the need for it has been demonstrated. But in this case I have never been convinced of the merits of the arguments, which seem to me to have failed adequately to distinguish the quite separate roles of the two services which give to each its own culture.

For the most part the differences are obvious. In the first place, the main business of the Diplomatic Service is to protect and further British interests abroad. To this end the Service performs two distinct functions. First, it tenders advice to the Government and to the proprietors and agents of British interests abroad and, secondly, it analyses and assesses the attitudes of foreign governments and peoples towards British interests with a view to influencing them. The first of these functions is analogous to that of the home departments. But the second calls for skills and techniques for which there is no general need in the home departments.

Then there is the difference in the size of the two services. The Diplomatic Service is comparatively small; its total strength is only one tenth of the Department of Health and Social Security. Despite the need for geographical specialisms, the range of work in the Diplomatic Service is narrower than in the home service and there are fewer grades. In posts overseas there is something akin to a family atmosphere, not only in the mission itself but also within the resident diplomatic corps and the British community. This is especially true where the climate and living conditions are harsh and, as is frequently the case these days, the regime is ill-disposed, or suspicious, or both. In such circumstances it is even more important than in more congenial posts that members of the staff of the mission and their families should maintain a cordial relationship one with another. Tours of duty abroad are of limited duration and those who find a colleague incompatible can console themselves counting the days until either they or the colleague move on to a different pasture. Creating and preserving harmonious relationships is an essential task for an ambassador if he hopes to run an effective embassy. At times he will need to display the talents of Solomon, at others the qualities of Job. Generally speaking, an ambassador, as *pater familias,* and his wife will find demands placed on them which do not fall within the normal experience of a permanent secretary or head of division in a home department.

The fact that these differences exist between the services does not mean that they cannot learn from each other. On the contrary. For much of the period since the Second War the British approach to international affairs has been broadly bipartisan, although there have been—as there are

today—notable disagreements on certain issues between the parties. This has meant that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not as a rule had to contend with the relentless tooth and nail opposition in Parliament to most aspects of government policy to which the staff of the home departments become accustomed early in their careers. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has few statutory responsibilities which bear on the life of the individual citizen, and it is only rarely that he introduces legislation; when he does it is often non-controversial. To members of the Diplomatic Service, therefore, Parliament is a less familiar feature of the landscape than it is for the home departments. In the past the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has assigned inadequate resources to its relations with Parliament, no doubt to the disadvantage of both and to the detriment of our foreign policy. The practice of reporting regularly to Parliament on the proceedings of the Council of Ministers at Brussels or Luxembourg and the attention the select committees in both Houses have focused on current international issues may be inducing a change of attitude.

If I see little merit in some fusion of the services this is not for the sake of *vive la différence,* but rather because the alleged benefits seem illusory. However, that should not be the end of the argument. The roles of the two services are complementary; here and there they coincide—many home civil servants negotiate these days with their counterparts abroad—and occasionally they overlap. For many years staff have been exchanged. There is, I believe, a case for intensifying this process despite the administrative and human problems cross-secondments inevitably raise. It is highly satisfactory that our major missions overseas have a regular complement of officers from home departments on their strength, and encouraging that more of our small missions in developing countries are being brought into the arrangement. The real forcing ground however is the United Kingdom Representation at Brussels. Sixty per cent of the senior staff come from home departments and forty per cent from the Diplomatic Service. All are engaged in the same kind of work; they and their families lead the same kind of life. Over the past decade, through UKREP, the European Unit in the Cabinet Office and through secondments to the Commission and the Council Secretariat in Brussels, there has been created a cadre of officials in both the home departments and the Diplomatic Service with first-hand experience of the Community. This pays dividends today and is a valuable investment for the future conduct of our business in the Community. But what may be more important in the long term is that there exists today an ever-growing group of high grade members of the two services who have worked side by side and shared an important experience. All but a few who carry their prejudices with them to Brussels jettison them before they return. In the main those who work on Community affairs acquire respect for and understanding of the problems

of members of the other service. This seems to me a sound basis for the future relationship between the services.

* * *

Taking over a department as an outsider obviously raises special problems, at least in the early stages. It is not possible to master all the issues which cross one's desk in the first few months. In any event a Permanent Secretary cannot aspire to do more than know a little about a lot; there are others elsewhere in the hierarchy who know a lot about a little. But what one can do is get to know the people with whom one will be working. In this respect I was fortunate. The Department of Energy is among the smallest, numbering just over eleven hundred souls at the end of 1982. Although, as I was to learn later, this small size could be a disadvantage, it meant that it did not take long to get to know one's principal colleagues well enough to be able to assess their ability and their judgement, and to acquire certain other basic knowledge—such as who supported Spurs and who Everton, and why.

Like his Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary has no peer in the department. The effectiveness of any department must depend to a considerable extent on the relationship between these two potentially lonely people. George Eliot's Mr Casaubon knew the answer very well when he asked himself: 'What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?' To judge by some ministerial memoirs there has in the past been distrust and even antipathy between some ministers and their senior advisers. This may still be the case. But, like most of my colleagues, I enjoyed a relationship based on mutual confidence with each of the Secretaries of State I served and this mitigated any sense of loneliness. The TV series *Yes Minister** hits many larger than life-size nails on the head, and that is good clean fun. But it does not, of course, purport to convey the splendid quality this relationship can have when, for example, a real crisis has to be managed, or a complex issue put to the Secretary of State's cabinet colleagues, and the choices lie between different shades of grey—that colour scheme familiar to all who have ever carried responsibility for public affairs. I am sure I am not alone in believing that to have had the opportunity of sharing with ministers the perplexities, the anxieties, the disappointments and the occasional triumphs of the business of government is a privilege which outweighs many of the drawbacks of a career in the public service.

The time a Permanent Secretary can devote to his role of principal adviser on policy is limited by the other demands placed upon him, and especially his responsibilities as the top manager. In this capacity he has to

**Yes Minister: the Diaries of a Cabinet Minister* by A Jay and J Lynn, BBC, 1981–2.

undertake tasks of different kinds—those which derive from his official position as permanent head of the department and accounting officer; those he assumes of his own volition; and those specific tasks which from time to time the central departments require him (along with others) to undertake.

Over the past few years tasks specified by the central departments have preoccupied the top management of all departments. The manpower cuts, the Wardale review* and the subsequent reduction in the size of the Open Structure, the Rayner scrutinies, the change from volume to cash in expressing public expenditure, and the financial management initiative** have involved all departments. Some have in addition been subject to various investigations, for instance of relations with nationalised industries, as well as inquiries by select committees. Like the good general, the Permanent Secretary has to be a 'theatre' rather than a 'battle' commander. Where they are not obvious he has to explain to his staff the wider implications which have led to these particular tasks being imposed on the department.

There was no question in my mind when I joined the Department of Energy but that certain reforms were needed if the Civil Service were to perform more effectively. It also seemed likely that if these were to be carried through, pressure would need to be exerted from the centre. Experience has not altered this view. There is a telling phrase in a letter the then Chief of the Imperial General Staff sent to General Auchinleck when he became Commander in Chief in the Middle East in June 1941: 'The Commander in the field will always be subject to great and often undue pressure from his Government . . . Nothing will stop it. In fact, *pressure from those who alone see the picture as a whole and carry the main responsibility may be necessary.*'

At the same time, the question of the effectiveness of the Civil Service has to be kept in perspective. The cost of the Civil Service is high and the taxpayer is entitled to value for his money. But the cost does not compare with some other items in the nation's budget. The fact is that policy decisions can have a far greater impact on public expenditure than administrative changes; (but that is no reason of course for not making such changes). One has only to think, for example, of decisions on defence procurement, on major public projects, or the financing of the deficits of some of the nationalised industries. This argument applies not only to decisions which prove in the long run to have been mistaken, but also to those from which governments resile. When a verdict comes to be passed on this country's performance since the war I should not be surprised if our

*_Chain of Command Review: the Open Structure_. Report of a Team led by Sir G Wardale, CSD, 1981.

**'Financial Management: Note by the Treasury and MPO', in _Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service_. Cmnd. 8616, HMSO, 1982.

shortcomings are attributed as much to those decisions which were not taken, or were postponed, as to those which were taken and were wrong.

In the end, as I was taught in my youth, success is the attainment of the objective set. Under our system responsibility for defining objectives lies with the government of the day. For the rest, governance consists of achieving these objectives in the most effective way and with the best use of the resources at the disposal of the state. It is in this context that the size, the role and the performance of the Civil Service should be examined.

The Civil Service had grown in size over the years. This was due at least in part to the demands placed upon it by successive governments. When ministers called for the process to be reversed, as a service we were slow to react; and it has to be added that the substantial progress made in reducing civil service numbers dates from the setting of a bold target. A concomitant of the increase in the size of the service was a tendency for responsibility to drift upwards; in consequence the service had become top-heavy. The surgery being performed on the Open Structure will, amongst other things, ensure that responsibility is delegated and that heads of divisions and branches recover their birthright. Then again, objectives for departments had become obscure; this is not surprising, given the often bewildering changes of political direction over the past two decades.

In the past few years the Service has changed to an extent which may not be widely appreciated, and a good deal of the credit is due to the steady pressure from the centre. At the receiving end of this pressure a small department is at something of a disadvantage. For one thing, there is only a handful of staff available to deal with all the central initiatives and they can become so occupied with these that they have little time left to develop, let alone apply, their own ideas for administrative improvements. Moreover, central initiatives which produce substantial benefits in large departments with numerous executive functions may not be suitable for a policy-oriented department. For example, there is little to be gained by establishing a financial control mechanism appropriate to a trading enterprise where no activity takes place which can readily be measured; and this is generally true with policy formulation. Clearly a different method of achieving the same purpose is required in such cases.

Some schemes for reform are likely to be less cost-effective in a small department than in one of the big battalions such as the Department of the Environment. A Rayner scrutiny into the Department of Energy's international work cost some £14,000 and identified potential savings of about £40,000. Meanwhile, however, action by our Establishment Officer, which cost little more than his intellectual effort, cut the department's travel and subsistence budget by £300,000 in one year.

To make the best use of the ingenuity to be found in establishment divisions the central departments might draw on the example of the army.

Because staff officers in the 1914–18 War were regarded by those in the trenches as a special breed who spent their time in chateaux behind the lines swilling champagne, particular efforts were made in the Second War to recruit officers with battle experience to serve on headquarters staff. In Whitehall the central departments might on a regular basis fill certain of those posts which deal with the outlying departments on management matters with people from those departments. Apart from lubricating relationships, such an arrangement could be helpful in tailoring the requirements of the centre to the individual circumstances of departments.

* * *

At times during my last year in the Department of Energy incidents from the early part of my army service came into my mind. There is no obvious connexion between the duties of an infantry subaltern and a Permanent Secretary. I may have been conscious of a wheel coming full circle. But this sounds wistful, and that is not at all how I felt. Perhaps I wanted to recall the high purpose of those days to offset the regret I felt at ending my career at a time when both the Civil Service and the Diplomatic Service stood low in public esteem. Criticisms of the two Services have accumulated like evening clouds gathering on the western horizon as if to hasten the setting of the sun. Where these criticisms are justified—and some clearly are—the two Services should heed them. Others reflect ignorance or prejudice, or both; but they are no less harmful for that.

The Radio 4 series *No Minister** broadcast in 1981 was remarkable in several respects. Politicians and civil servants were persuaded to discuss their work with unusual freedom. The result was a penetrating insight into our system of government. The series was, however, also notable in that it contained no examination of the motivation of civil servants. If it had, the conclusion could well have surprised many listeners and counter-balanced the impression of a continuous struggle for power between ministers and mandarins. I regret this omission all the more because the reforms of the past few years were not at all easy for the Service to absorb. The response to the challenge by the staff of the only department for which I can speak was understanding and constructive. Yet, these reforms were carried out against the background of public criticism. This has undoubtedly led to a decline in morale. I doubt whether this has reached the point where the motivation of the service in general has been affected. Nonetheless, the time has come, in my view, for those who wield effective influence to take steps to restore morale, and so to ensure that the present dedication of the Service to the task in hand is sustained. What kind of steps? Inspiration might well be found in what the wartime generation learned about the management of their troops.

**No Minister: an Inquiry into the Civil Service* by H Young and A Sloman, BBC, 1982.

Treasury Control of Public Expenditure: Some Recent Developments

Sir Anthony Rawlinson KCB

This is the text of an address by Sir Anthony to a joint meeting of the Royal Institute of Public Administration and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in Edinburgh on 24 January 1983. At that time he was Second Permanent Secretary (Public Services), HM Treasury and the speech was a considered statement about the aspects discussed in it of public expenditure control and financial management. Sir Anthony became Permanent Secretary at the Department of Trade on 1 May.

In this talk I want to discuss certain developments in public expenditure management—a word which includes control but is deliberately wider—which have been and are a major preoccupation of my side of the Treasury in recent months. My choice of subjects, and the way I look at them, is influenced by my viewpoint, which is that of the Treasury; but let me start by reiterating the familiar theme that in these recent developments, as in the rest of the British system of public expenditure management, success depends on constructive partnership between the Treasury and the spending departments.

Objectives

Speaking as I do as an official, not a Minister, I address myself to techniques and systems rather than to policy. But in this as in other fields the distinction is not sharp. The techniques we use are rightly influenced by the policy objectives to be pursued.

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The main themes of current public expenditure policy are familiar enough. The overriding objective is restraint of the cash total of public expenditure. This is part of the Government's financial strategy to bring down inflation, and to create conditions for sustainable growth. A second major objective is to promote efficiency and value for money throughout the public sector. Each of these objectives stands by itself, but the first, the policy of restraint, is also a powerful stimulus to the second.

The importance of these objectives needs no emphasis. It is sufficient to remember the huge size of the outlays comprehended in the term public expenditure. The main decisions which resulted from the 1982 annual Survey concerning planned expenditure in the next financial year 1983–84 were announced in the Autumn Statement last November.* Further details, and the provisional plans for the following two years are in the 1983 White Paper.**

It was an achievement of the 1982 Survey that the cash totals settled for the next year and the year after were within the figures planned in the previous 1981 Survey; so that the persistent creep, whereby in each annual Survey it was decided to increase the plans of the previous year, was at last arrested. Yet the total for 1983–84 is in the region of £120bn, which was calculated in the Autumn Statement to imply a ratio to the gross domestic product as there forecast of 44 per cent. The cash total is within the figure planned in the previous Survey, but is nearly £6bn above the total planned in the 1982 White Paper*** for the year 1982–83, and even more above the outturn for that year, during which spending in certain categories has shown a large shortfall against the original plans.

Nevertheless the containment of the totals within the previous provisional plans is a welcome advance. There is nothing illegitimate in changing in the Survey previous provisional plans. The Survey is intended to be a review and that is why the plans for later years are labelled provisional. But the value of looking forward, and the efficiency with which the programmes can be managed, will be improved by more stability in these plans than has been attained in recent years. Subject always to the evolution of the economic situation, it will be welcome if in future Surveys the previous provisional plans prove more robust, against pressures in either direction, than in most recent years, and if within the total greater stability can be extended to the plans for each main programme.

Cash planning

You will have noticed that I have been talking about the cash totals, and I mentioned financial strategy. This leads me to the first major development I

*_Autumn Statement 1982._ (Session 1982–83) HC 10, HMSO, 1982.
**_The Government's Expenditure Plans 1983–84 to 1985–86,_ Cmnd. 8789, HMSO, 1983.
***_The Government's Expenditure Plans 1982–83 to 1984–85._ Cmnd. 8494, HMSO, 1982.

want to discuss, namely, the move to full cash planning in the annual public expenditure Surveys.

I remind you briefly of the history. Up to and including 1980, the annual Surveys were conducted in so-called volume terms, that is, the programmes were discussed, and eventually published, in terms of constant prices of a past period. The programme figures so decided were later translated by automatic adjustment into the cash terms relevant to tax and budgetary policy.

The unsatisfactory results of this system led in the mid-70s to what can now be seen as a transitional arrangement, whereby cash limits were superimposed on the plans originally determined in constant prices, but only for the year next ahead. Over the last two years we have moved in two stages to full cash planning.

The 1981 Survey was the first of which the outcome, published in the 1982 White Paper, was expressed entirely in cash, but the 1981 Survey was still transitional in that it started from the previous White Paper expressed in constant prices, so that the first task had to be to convert the earlier volume programmes into cash, using a set of specified cash factors. The 1982 Survey for the first time operated in cash throughout, starting from the cash programmes as they were left in the last White Paper as slightly modified by the Budget, and as usual adding a further year. The cash programmes as published in the coming White Paper will again form the starting point for the 1983 Survey.

This change to full cash planning is fundamentally a change of policy rather than of technique. It concerns the type of resources which in current conditions are regarded as the main constraint which determines the framework for planning programmes. The change is not, as some people seem to have thought, an abandonment of the Plowden Report* of 1961, so often cited, rightly, as the basis of the Survey system. The central principle of that report holds, namely, that (in the much quoted words) regular surveys should be made of public expenditure as a whole, over a period of years ahead, and in relation to prospective resources, and that decisions involving substantial future expenditure should be taken in the light of those surveys. The Plowden Report did not mention constant prices. When the first pioneering Survey was done in accordance with its recommendations—this was long before the annual White Papers—a pivotal element was consideration of the cash implications for tax and finance.

What has changed from the way in which the Survey subsequently developed is that the resources against which expenditure is to be planned, and which primarily constrain it, are now seen as financial. This is

*_Control of Public Expenditure_. Cmnd. 1432, Chairman: Lord Plowden, HMSO, 1961.

consistent with current economic conditions and with the Government's strategy. It is cash expenditure which must be considered in relation to, and made consistent with, the Government's objectives for taxation, the borrowing requirement and the money supply. Of course the real content of programmes remains essential to the consideration by the spending authorities of their programme proposals; but the collective decisions are concerned primarily with the overriding central financial constraint.

The transition to cash planning has been managed by spending departments with remarkable efficiency and smoothness. The system can be said to be working well. It is achieving its objective of producing decisions in the Survey which can be, and are, translated directly not only into Parliamentary Estimates and into the Budget, but also into medium term financial projections. The concept is less confusing than the transitional arrangement mixing one year's cash limits with constant price planning, and the new system overcomes what had been a demerit of that mixed system, namely that it failed to establish the presumption that in so far as cash limits turn out to squeeze the earlier volume plans, that squeeze should in principle be carried forward from one year to the next. The presumption now is that any squeeze will be carried forward. The cash provision for the following years will not automatically be altered because of movements of prices in the current year. That does not mean that no change can ever be made. It does mean that any decision to mitigate this effect, whether wholly or in part, has to be a deliberate one, discussed and agreed during the Survey.

Some problems of cash planning

Obviously the cash system involves some problems. I will mention two.

The first concerns the programme planning figures for the later years. It has become more difficult to establish what these figures should be, because they must now take account of a major variable, namely price changes. It is no longer enough for programme planners to consider the real content of a programme by itself, that is, what it is hoped to buy or to provide. It is necessary also to consider what may happen to prices, both in general and relatively, and what response would be appropriate or indeed practicable in response to such changes.

This is a proper and necessary discipline. But it is difficult, and there are those who have felt that it makes the figures for the later years so uncertain that it is harder to take them seriously.

The reaction is understandable. Yet the reasons remain valid for looking at spending plans over a period of years ahead. It is sensible to look at the implications for the future of decisions being taken now which build up over time, to look at them in the context of a view about the totals, and to

consider priorities and choices, not least choices between expenditure and tax relief, at a time when changes, if desired, can be made effective without waste. True, future planning figures are of limited use if they cannot attain some degree of stability and robustness—I have already said that it would be welcome if we could move further in this direction—but the difficulty resulting from uncertainty about future inflation is there anyway. It is not a consequence of cash planning. It is not conceivable that if inflation were greatly different from what was expected when the programmes were framed, constant price figures could be left unchanged. The financial constraint is in the end decisive, whatever the system of planning.

A related line of criticism is that the cash figures are all very well, but by themselves do not exhibit adequately, for the information of Parliament and the public, what real content is expected or intended as a result of the financial provision made. This is a valid question. But it would be misguided to seek to meet it by publishing alongside the cash plans for future years a new set of 'volume' figures of the old type. I say this for a number of reasons.

First, the Survey as now conducted does not use such figures for collective Ministerial decision making. There are in general no 'volume' plans collectively determined by Ministers. Of course, in determining the acceptability of cash provisions for the later years, the Ministers concerned do have some broad view in mind of the course of inflation. But it is not necessary to express this in precise, quantified terms; nor is this done. Nor starting from the cash plans would it be easy to compile systematically 'volume' equivalents. This would require detailed forecasts to be made and published of price movements, including pay, for a wide range of goods and services over the whole Survey period. Such figures would offer only a crude measure of planned inputs of goods and services to programmes. They would take no account of changes in efficiency, and thus would be unsatisfactory, as the old style figures always were, as a measure of output or level of service. Even within this limitation the resulting figures would be only as good as the detailed price forecasts used to compile them. Under present policy they would have no planning significance. But they might be interpreted wrongly as implying some sort of entitlement to certain 'volume' programmes, which could weaken the intended primacy of the cash plans.

It is technically straightforward, and goes some way to provide information of the kind desired, to deflate the cash plans uniformly by the gross domestic product (GDP) deflator to produce the so-called 'cost terms' figures which discount general inflation. Such figures are provided in the White Paper for the years up to and including 1983–84, the period for which a forecast of the GDP deflator has been published. Cost terms figures for the later years are not published because any figure for the GDP

deflator then can only be an assumption and its use could as just mentioned create misleading and counter-productive expectations of entitlement.

Cost terms figures have some uses, but do not distinguish changes in the quantity of goods and services to be bought from changes in their relative prices. They are not a reliable indicator of levels of service.

For this the way forward has to be to look directly at what is intended to be bought for, or provided by, the various services, in the terms in which programme planners actually operate—at numbers of frigates, or schools, or hospitals, or policemen—and to develop measures of output and performance indicators which exhibit in an illuminating way the level of service. Such measures are often difficult. In the last two or three White Papers some progress has been made, but there is a long way to go. Those of us, not only in the Treasury but in spending departments, who are concerned with public information about these matters need to devote further effort to the development and publication of useful output measures.

The Treasury and spending departments: block budgets

Now I should like to notice two matters concerning the relationship between the Treasury and spending departments.

An interesting concomitant of the development of cash planning, not I think necessarily linked only with that, but encouraged by it, has been a move towards increasing use of block budgets. By this I mean arrangements whereby a Department is allotted by agreement with the Treasury, and eventually by the Cabinet, a specified sum of money for its whole programme, within which the Minister concerned is free to take his own decisions about the deployment of the funds so allotted, and their distribution between his various sub-programmes. This arrangement was first pioneered in the Defence budget, which for some years has been treated as a whole, with the Secretary of State for Defence responsible for the distribution of funds within it. More recently block budgets have been established for the Secretary of State for Scotland, and for Wales and for Northern Ireland. Other spending Ministers have not yet had the formal arrangement but there has been some informal movement in that direction in decision making about their programmes.

There are conflicting views and arguments about this trend. On the whole in my view the trend is a healthy one, convenient for all concerned, not in practice leading to unnecessary increases in total expenditure, but rather to more efficient, and certainly more rapid, distribution of the financial resources available, and to decisions as to that distribution which are more responsive to the views and preferences of those most closely and authoritatively involved. It also widens to a useful degree the scope, within the system of annual budgets and annual accounting, for a measure of

flexibility in managing sub-programmes and projects where the rate of spend is not precisely controllable within specified dates.

This matter of block budgeting concerns not only the Treasury but also Parliamentary control. I am not attempting to cover Parliamentary control in this talk, but this too is an area where potentially important developments are taking place. I am thinking especially of the intention of Parliament that, as a preliminary to what is meant to be a more genuine discussion of the Supply Estimates on the three expenditure days, departmental Select Committees are now to carry out a selective examination in some detail of the Estimates of the Departments which they monitor. This gives new importance to the enquiries which some of the Select Committees have begun to make, and lays on Departments the task, not only of being prepared to justify to the Select Committees their requirements for funds, but of providing the information they need in a form which is manageable and illuminating and cost effective in terms of the administrative resources it consumes. If this element of the work of Select Committees develops in the way intended, it is bound to influence, as has the prevailing Parliamentary climate in the past, the way in which the Treasury and spending departments set about their management tasks. It is to be hoped that this influence will support, and not be found to conflict with, methods of management which make for efficiency.

Civil service manpower numbers

I must now mention one area which is an exception to the trend towards block budgeting, and indeed something of an exception to cash planning, where central Treasury control concerns itself with real content as much as with cash. This is civil service manpower numbers.

As is well known, the present Government adopted a specific policy concerning civil service manpower numbers, namely that the total size of the Civil Service is to be brought down to about 630,000 on 1 April 1984. We are on course for that aim.

Manpower targets of this kind may be a crude instrument, but in practice they have proved a powerful stimulus not only to getting the numbers down, but to efficiency. They are a device which many large organisations are adopting for similar reasons. What sort of policy will follow for the years after April 1984 is not yet decided, but as a result of the abolition of the Civil Service Department in November 1981, and the transfer to the Treasury of responsibility for central control of civil service manpower numbers and of pay, it will now be possible to operate manpower policy to a much greater degree within the procedural framework of the annual Survey.

This will be aided by a further administrative change within the Treasury. Last August the manpower divisions transferred from the Civil Service

Department were merged with the rest of the Treasury expenditure groups, so that the same Treasury group which handles each department's main expenditure now also deals with its civil service manpower.

I believe that this has been a useful change. The arguments were not all one way. It will make it more difficult to foster and develop among Treasury staff specialist skills in manpower work, and it may make more difficult the comparisons of one department with another which are often useful in this field. But it supports and sustains the principle that the resources allocated to departments and their programmes ought to be managed and controlled as a whole, and the doctrine, prominent in the financial management initiative which I shall discuss in a moment, of comprehensive responsibility for line managers working within a budget. The concentration of the Treasury's knowledge of and relations with each department should improve the understanding of those concerned in the Treasury of what each department is aiming to do. Consultation with departments showed some division of preference, but it ought in general to be more convenient for departments to deal with one Treasury division rather than two. And above all, the change supports the concern of the Treasury with departmental management systems, and the whole campaign to improve financial management.

Which brings me to this important matter, in which the Treasury expenditure divisions have a key role, being as in other matters the main channel for dialogue between spending departments and the centre.

Improving financial management

What has become known as the financial management initiative was formally launched when the Prime Minister circulated last May the paper subsequently published as an annex to the Government's reply to the report of the Treasury Civil and Service Committee on efficiency and effectiveness in the Civil Service.*

That paper called for a general and co-ordinated drive to improve financial management in Government departments. It asked all the main departments to develop and define by the end of this month of January 1983 a programme of action related to the general ideas and principles which it set out.

The main objective, as there stated, is 'to promote in each department an organisation and a system in which managers at all levels have:

(i) a clear view of their objectives; and assess and wherever possible measure outputs or performance in relation to the objectives;

(ii) well defined responsibility for making best use of their resources including a critical scrutiny of output and value for money;

**Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service.* Cmnd. 8616, HMSO, 1983, Appendix 3, pp 21–27.

(iii) the information (including particularly about costs), training and access to expert advice which they need to exercise their responsibilities effectively'.

The doctrines summarised in this and related papers owe much to those current in other large organisations and among private sector management consultants. But we have to recognise the special problems posed by the absence, over most of the work of Government departments, of the yardstick of profitability, and the fact that so many Government objectives are generalised, with the test of success acceptability rather than a quantified measure of output. Within this environment special action is needed to promote a stronger sense of cost consciousness, and of duty to pursue prompt and effective action in response to that cost consciousness.

A necessary condition of cost consciousness is knowledge of what the cost, the full cost, of operations actually is. Hence the emphasis on the development of management accounting. But there is need also for an organisation of responsibilities which both encourages, and provides the means for, effective action.

In the departments which are most advanced much of the attention so far has gone to applying these doctrines to the management of a department's own administrative resources, that is, broadly, the cost which a department incurs domestically in managing and conducting its operations. In the phase now set in hand further attention is called for to applying them to the management of departments' programme expenditures, that is, to the expenditure mainly external to itself for which a department has either direct or indirect responsibility, and to the co-ordination of both administrative and programme expenditure in a system for planning and control of resources as a whole.

The doctrines are not novel, and may be held to be obvious. Certainly they are familiar in many Government departments, as elsewhere. The present drive is intended to build on what is already in hand. One aim is to bring all departments up to the level attained by those more advanced in this field. But there is more to be done even in the more advanced departments, and over the service as a whole there is no doubt that the initiative calls for quite profound changes.

In part it is a matter of improving information to managers at all levels. That sounds easy, but is not. On the cost side, the task of pulling all the relevant costs together, and presenting them in a form which is both intelligible and useful at the successive managerial levels up to the top needs much care. On the output side, effort and hard thought is often needed to identify those measures or indicators which will show whether the objectives of expenditure are being met, or will at least provide some factual basis for assessing whether it is worthwhile. But the potential prize

is great, both in terms of the management of public money and in terms of its presentation to Parliament and the public in a more intelligible way.

The prize will only be attained if we succeed in strengthening not just the information system, but also the individual civil servant's sense of personal responsibility for the costs he incurs and the results he achieves. That opens up wide and sometimes difficult questions about the authority that can be delegated to subordinate managers to make decisions within the framework of Ministerial policy and the total budget allocated to them. Departments are only now beginning to work their way through these questions, but they may lead to quite important changes in the management style of the Civil Service.

The principle that the manager in charge of a unit should be responsible and accountable both for his activities, performance and results, and for the administrative resources within his control, usually points in the direction of dividing a department into coherent managerial blocks, in each of which there is an unbroken chain of full managerial responsibility from the most junior to the most senior and through him to the permanent secretary. That structure looks familiar enough, and is broadly how most departments are already organised, but full management responsibility implies at each level more knowledge of, and attention to, the full costs of the resources being used, and more authority to take decisions concerning those resources than has been common in most departments in the past.

This financial management initiative covers a wide and varied field. It is ambitious. Different departments will advance at varying pace. There are nice questions how far differences between them are acceptable, rightly reflecting different tasks or legitimate differences of judgement, or whether they indicate failure by some to match the standards of the best.

There are nice questions too about the relationship to departments of the Treasury and the Management and Personnel Office, which is linked with the Treasury in this work. It is right for the centre to give a lead, to seek to identify and promulgate good practice. It is wrong if activity by the centre goes so far as to discourage initiative in departments by provoking the thought that all these matters can and should be left to the centre with the department doing all it need if it complies with specific central directions. The financial management initiative preaches delegation and responsibility within a department. That applies to relations between the centre and departments also.

It is all going to take a long time. But there can be no doubt of the importance of what has been set in hand. The task now is to push it forward, and carry it to enduring success. I see it as a central theme of Treasury policy over the months and years ahead to sustain and wherever possible to accelerate the momentum of change. I began this talk with a

reference to the huge size of public expenditure. Not all of that is the direct expenditure of Government departments but to improve the standards of financial efficiency there will not only be good in itself, but a useful contribution to better efficiency in the economy as a whole.

Practical Constraints in the Preparation of Legislation

G L J Engle CB QC

This is part of a talk given to the Statute Law Society on 30 October 1982 by George Engle CB, First Parliamentary Counsel. The full text of the talk appeared in the Spring issue of the *Statute Law Review* published by Sweet and Maxwell of 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4.

A variety of constraints affect the preparation and passing of government bills. Three major constraints in this field are, first, the fact that Acts of Parliament are legal documents; second, shortage of time all along the line; and third, what I may call the impracticability of continuous redesign.

Acts of Parliament are legal documents

The fact that Acts of Parliament are legal documents marks them off from other kinds of writing with which they are sometimes unfavourably compared, such as works of literature, text-books, political manifestos and journalism. Their special character is well described by Sir Bruce Fraser in his revision of Gower's *The Complete Plain Words**:

> 'The legal draftsman', he says, '. . . has to ensure to the best of his ability that what he says will be found to mean precisely what he intended, even after it has been subjected to detailed and possibly hostile scrutiny by acute legal minds . . .

**The Complete Plain Words* by Sir E Gowers, rev. ed. by Sir B Fraser, HMSO, 1973, p.8.

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Management in Government 1983 (2) 90–97

> Legal drafting must therefore be unambiguous, precise [and] comprehensive . . . If it is readily intelligible, so much the better; but it is far more important that it should yield its meaning accurately than that it should yield it on first reading, and the legal draftsman cannot afford to give much attention, if any, to euphony or literary elegance. What matters most to him is that no one will succeed in persuading a court of law that his words bear a meaning he did not intend, and, if possible, that no one will think it worth while to try.
>
> All this means that his drafting is not to be judged by normal standards of good writing . . .'

This is not the moment to embark on a discussion of how far it would be practicable for acts of Parliament to be drafted in a more general and less detailed way, as has been urged. But I think it is true to say that they have become a good deal less formal in style over the last decade or so. In the course of his evidence to the Select Committee on Procedure in 1971 Sir John Fiennes said:

> 'You cannot [in a bill] have a discursive paragraph of the sort one puts into a letter, where each sentence supports the one before and the one after, and rely on people to read the whole thing and spell the meaning out from the overall effect.'*

There is obviously a great deal of truth in that; but the Parliamentary Counsel are nowadays increasingly inclined, wherever possible, to rely on the common sense of the reader in preference to dotting every *i* and crossing every *t*.

Acts of Parliament differ, of course, from private legal documents in that their main purpose is to alter the law. But it is very rare indeed for a bill to be aimed at what, in another context, the composer Stravinsky called 'a cool place on the pillow'. Our statute book goes back to the year 1267**. A great deal of the dead wood has been cleared away; but over the centuries there is hardly a topic that has not attracted its share of legislation. Once there has been legislation on a given topic, it is only a matter of time before a further round of legislation on the same topic is found to be necessary; and the nearer one gets to the present, the shorter is the interval between one round and the next.

This proliferation of statute law on every topic means that each new change in the law has to be meticulously knitted into the existing fabric; and this in turn means that the draftsman's room for manoeuvre is more

*_The Process of Legislation_. 2nd Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Procedure (Session 1970–71), HC 538. HMSO, 1971, para 1008.

**The earliest Act still in force is the Distress Act 1267 (c.1) (see _Statutes in Force_, HMSO, 'Chronological list of acts', p 131).

often than not severely limited by the need to make what he has to say fit in with, and match, the structure and language of existing statute law. In my experience it is comparatively rare for the draftsman to be entirely free of this particular form of constraint for more than a few lines at a time.

Shortage of time

For reasons which I hope to explain, much of the work of the Parliamentary Counsel, and of the departmental lawyers and administrators who instruct them, is done under considerable pressure of time. This is apt to be the case at all stages in the preparation of a piece of legislation, from the initial working out of the details of policy, through the preparation of drafting instructions and the production and consideration of successive drafts of a bill, to the stage of amendment in Parliament. This pressure basically results from the fact that the period of up to five years for which a Parliament is elected is in practice broken up into a succession of roughly year-long sessions, each of which is, legislatively speaking, entirely self-contained.

A normal session of Parliament starts at or soon after the end of October, and continues until the end of the following July, with short adjournments at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun. As often as not a backlog of legislative business makes it necessary for both Houses to sit again for a short spillover period in October, after which the session is terminated by prorogation. Bills which have not received Royal Assent by the end of the session in which they were introduced lapse.

The number of days on which the House of Commons sits in a normal session varies between 160 and 180. Of the 30 sessions from 1952–53 to 1980–81, 20 were of normal length in this sense. For those 20, the average number of days on which the House of Commons sat was 167; and of those 167 days, an average of 87 (over half) were unavoidably spent on matters other than government legislation. This left an average of 80 days per session for all government legislation, the actual number of days varying between 96 at one extreme and 60 at the other. However an average of 18 (or nearly a quarter) of those 80 days were necessarily devoted to proceedings on the unavoidable Finance and Consolidated Fund Bills, including proceedings on the Budget and the financial resolutions on which these Bills are brought in. So the average number of days available to the government for what I may call optional or 'programme' bills turns out to have been only 62. This comparatively meagre ration of (on average) 62 days per session for all proceedings on the floor of the House on programme bills severely limits the number of such bills which any government can in practice hope to get through Parliament in a normal session. For the same 20 normal sessions from 1952–53 onwards, the average number of government bills of all kinds

which received Royal Assent was 54. But if one subtracts from this figure the average of four unavoidable Finance and Consolidated Fund Bills, and further subtracts an average of eight consolidation and Statute Law Revision Bills per session, one is left with an average of only 42 programme bills per session, occupying the 62 days which, as we have seen, were on average available for such bills. And of these 42, a varying proportion will have had to be brought in at short notice in the course of the session, whether in response to unforeseeable circumstances or because some recognised contingency did in fact materialise. So, on average, a government is unlikely to be in a position to include more than some 30 to 35 programme bills in its legislative programme for a normal session, as originally planned.*

Into the 60-odd days available for programme bills there have to be fitted all those proceedings on these bills which fall to be taken on the floor of the House, namely Second Reading, Committee of the whole House, Report, Third Reading and, for bills amended by the Lords after they have left the Commons, consideration of Lords Amendments. In practice the Committee stage of nearly all programme bills takes place 'upstairs' in one of the standing committees rather than on the floor of the House; and since 1965 it has been possible for the Government, with the agreement of the Opposition, to arrange for the Second Readings of a number of non-controversial government bills to be taken upstairs in a Second Reading Committee, thus saving some time in the House itself. Even so, when it comes to deciding how many bills can sensibly be included in the legislative programme for a given session, the primary constraint is the number of days on the floor of the House that they may be expected to occupy. This is a matter on which the views of the Ministers responsible for the management of the Government's parliamentary business naturally carry great weight. The more controversial the bill, the more time it will eat up.

The legislative programme for each session is, as you would expect, finally decided on by the Cabinet; but the task of eliciting from government departments their proposals for legislation, and of drawing up for the Cabinet's approval a list of bills recommended for inclusion in the programme for the session in question, is performed by a smaller group of Ministers. One effect of living under the rule of law is that many of the changes that the government of the day would like to bring about can only be achieved by altering the law. Because of this, it is quite usual for the number of bills proposed by departments to be more than double the number for which there is room in the programme; and the list of recommended bills is only arrived at after a good deal of ministerial

*See further the passage headed 'The Government Programme' on pp 287–288 of Erskine May's Parliamentary practice, 19th ed, Butterworths, 1976.

discussion. In his revealing book *Government and Parliament* Herbert Morrison, who master-minded the 1945 Labour Government's legislative programme, described this process as follows:

> 'With the Chief Whip's report indicating the limits of the practicable, the Future Legislation Committee met a roomful of clamant Ministers persuasively arguing the case for the inclusion of their bill or bills in the next sessional programme. These were interesting though sometimes trying meetings. The Ministers gradually learned the principles and standards by which the members of the Future Legislation Committee judged eligibility, and made the most brilliant efforts to prove that their proposals conformed. Their sincerity was not in question, but always more legislation was sought than there was parliamentary time available for its consideration. The argument and the questioning would proceed between the members of the Committee and the other Ministers and, indeed, between the other Ministers themselves. It was inevitable, however, that many Ministers were disappointed. After the departmental Ministers had departed, or on another day, the little band of Ministers who constituted the Future Legislation Committee—who had little or no direct interest in legislative projects—would fairly consider the claims and do everything they could to meet the requests of their colleagues. Some we had to exclude from the . . . sessional programme for lack of merit or because there just was not time, whilst others we would include in the list for introduction if time should permit.'*

One way, of course, in which room can be found in the programme for legislative projects which, as separate bills, would take up too much parliamentary time, is to combine in a single bill topics which would more suitably appear in two or more separate bills. This is something which departments are well aware of in framing their annual bids; and even where separate bids are put in for topics that have little connection with each other, it is not uncommon for these to end up in the programme as ingredients in a single, compound bill. What this sort of 'compounding' can lead to is well illustrated by the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 (c.65) of which the Law Society justly remarked that it is 'in effect a collection of separate Acts rolled into one with very little connection between them'.** It is just this sort of Act that tends to contain

**Government and Parliament: a Survey from the Inside* by H Morrison, OUP, 1954, pp 234–235.

***Commencement of Statutes: Problems in the Parliamentary Session 1979–80.* Memorandum by the Law Reform Committee of the Law Society, 1980, para 24.

separate commencement provisions for each of its component parts—this unpopular feature being thus, nearly always, the direct result of the annual attempt to get a quart of legislation into a pint pot of parliamentary time. This process sometimes produces strange bedfellows. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (c.37) is mostly concerned with securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work; but Part III consists of 37 pages dealing with the really quite separate topic of building regulations in England and Wales and building standards regulations in Scotland. The inclusion of the rebarbative abbreviation 'etc.' in the short title of the Act is a tiny monument to the draftsman's dislike of the admission of this unwelcome cuckoo into an otherwise homogeneous nest.

The process of settling the legislative programme for a given session of Parliament may take, from start to finish, anything up to five months; and the fact that it only starts around Christmas, after the preceding session has been got under way, means that the final details will probably not be decided until some time in May—though it may be clear before then that certain bills will almost certainly be included. This period of uncertainty coincides with the main period of parliamentary activity on the current session's bills, when departmental lawyers and administrators may have little or no time to spare for new work. So until a sponsoring department knows for certain that a particular bill proposed by it has obtained a firm place in the next session's programme, it will in the nature of things be reluctant to devote too much of the time of its hard-pressed officials to the detailed working out of the policy, let alone to the all-important but onerous task of preparing drafting instructions—something which, in any case, cannot be taken very far until the details of the policy have been settled.

The result of all this is that, for too many bills, the time left for serious work on their preparation is less, and for large and difficult bills often far less, than the minimum time needed to do the job satisfactorily. Instructions may have to be sent before the policy is finally settled. Drafting too often has to begin on the basis of partial or incomplete instructions. And if the requirements of the parliamentary timetable make it necessary for a particular bill to be introduced at the earliest practicable moment in the session, the draftsman may find himself hard put to it to produce a bill at all in the time, and is most unlikely to be allowed the luxury of a period of calm in which to consider how the drafting could be improved. Given time, the draftsman of a bill can nearly always perceive ways in which its structure and wording could be bettered; but this is not something that can be done in a rush. And once a bill has been introduced and published, Ministers are understandably reluctant to prolong the proceedings on it—and especially those proceedings which take up time on the floor of the House—by moving amendments which are not strictly necessary. Most

large or controversial bills—and many bills are both—are more or less heavily amended in the course of their passage. These amendments are partly accounted for by changes of policy, mainly in response to criticisms made in or outside Parliament, and partly by the necessity of making such corrections and additions as are needed to remedy defects and omissions in the bill which there was not time to deal with, and perhaps not even time to detect, in the run-up to introduction. Thus shortage of time in Parliament militates against the moving of amendments, whose only purpose is to cure infelicities of structure and wording.

The impracticability of continuous redesign

The third and last of the constraints I mentioned earlier is what I have chosen to call the impracticability of continuous redesign. By this I mean the practical difficulty of altering the basic structural and conceptual elements of a bill, as originally designed, so as to enable it to accommodate and present in a satisfactory way all sorts of additional provisions, late changes of policy and other afterthoughts which could not be foreseen when it was originally designed. One of the skills of the experienced draftsman is to make some allowance in his original design for this sort of proliferation. But there is a limit to what he can cater for, sight unseen.

On receipt of a set of drafting instructions, the draftsman's first task is to study them and make sure that he fully understands what those instructing him wish to achieve. To arrive at this understanding he may need to discuss particular aspects of the instructions with the department concerned; and these discussions may result in immediate modification of details of the proposals. When he is reasonably clear about what is wanted, the draftsman must at a fairly early stage decide on a suitable set of concepts in which to embody the basic ideas with which the bill is concerned, and must work out an appropriate legislative structure for the bill as a whole. This 'design' aspect of the drafting process is concerned not only with the overall arrangement of what may be a large and complex body of material, but also with the internal organisation of each particular clause or schedule; and it is not too much to say that good design, in this sense, is the essence of a well-drafted bill. The trouble is, of course, that a conceptual and legislative structure designed to fit a particular set of detailed legislative proposals ought, in principle, to be reconsidered and, where necessary, redesigned each time the proposals it was designed for are altered or added to. As Sir John Fiennes said in a memorandum* submitted in 1971 to the Select Committee on Procedure of the House of Commons:

**The Form of Bills and Methods of Amendment.* Memorandum submitted by the First Parliamentary Counsel to the House of Commons Select Committee on Procedure (Session 1970–71), HC 538, HMSO, 1971, paras 4, 5.

'. . . The firmer the proposals are at the beginning, the easier it is to arrive at an acceptable and intelligible structure. Most bills are subject to a continuous process of textual amendment, from the second to the final (perhaps twentieth) draft, as well as in the two Houses; radical changes are naturally easier before introduction, but even then there is too little opportunity to reconsider the whole with a fresh eye after the substance is settled. Sometimes the whole concept is altered . . . Even without that there is nothing so destructive of any logical and coherent arrangement as a continued process of textual amendment. If the arrangement is not disturbed (as it usually cannot be after introduction), it is often at the cost of compressing new matter unduly and lengthening unduly the clause or subsection into which it has to be fitted.'

Each successive draft of a bill is apt to cause the instructing department to have second thoughts about some aspects of the detailed policy; and major shifts of policy are not unusual. If something has to be done, it nearly always calls for more detail in the next draft. In the early stages it may be comparatively easy to redesign each successive draft to fit the latest version of what is wanted; but as each successive draft embodies a larger proportion of material that has been seen and commented on by the various departments interested in the bill, it becomes more and more difficult, in the time available before introduction, to make radical changes in the way the bill is drafted, since to do so would mean taking to pieces many provisions which have been generally agreed.

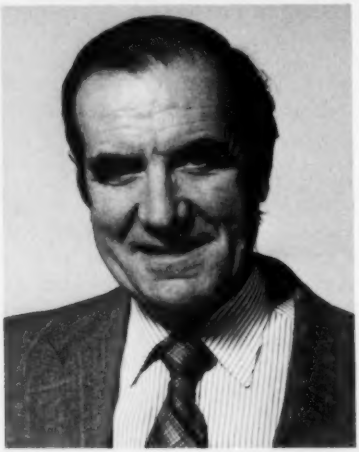
Once the bill has been introduced, there is little enthusiasm for redesign for redesign's sake. Yet, in the case of nearly all complex or controversial bills, the process of amendment goes relentlessly on; and though the draftsman can sometimes achieve a measure of redesign in the course of preparing government amendments to the bill, his ability to do anything radical in this line is limited by the fact that it is usually not until the bill is nearing the end of its course that its ultimate content becomes settled in substance—and by then Ministers are not only reluctant to disturb provisions which have emerged from earlier stages of the bill, but are also, as I have already mentioned, unwilling to devote valuable time on the floor of the House to amendments which are not strictly necessary.

Conclusion

It may be imagined how these and other constraints might affect the drafting of large or controversial Acts such as the British Nationality Act 1981 (c.61) and the Employment Act 1982 (c.46). Like most things in life, the preparation of legislation is seldom as straightforward as it might appear to be.

Developments in Occupational Health Surveillance in the Civil Service

A M Semmence



Adrian Semmence was in general practice for over 20 years before joining the Civil Service in 1976 and is now the Civil Service Medical Adviser. He has a particular interest in the relationship between general practice and occupational medicine. In this article he describes recent changes in the work of the Civil Service Medical Advisory Service.

Until recently most doctors believed that the cost of treatment or of providing services should not enter into health care planning. Now most recognise a duty to measure costs against benefits. These costs are opportunity costs which are measured not only in financial terms but also in terms of what else could be provided for the same sum of money—one man's renal transplant balanced against the cost of care of an elderly dement, for example. In such an example the effectiveness of alternative procedures has to be considered together with the numbers of people who would benefit. In other decisions in preventive medicine financial values have to be placed on health and on life itself. Two methods of costing life are commonly used, the 'human capital' approach which calculates the value to society of the future earnings of an individual and the 'willingness to pay' approach which estimates how much people are prepared to pay to reduce the risks they run. A third calculation is of cost per life saved. Professor Teeling-Smith of the Office of Health Economics has estimated that this might be as much as £55 million if some of the measures

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suggested to monitor new drugs were introduced. He calculated the cost of following up 100,000 patients for three years, on each of the 20 new pharmaceutical chemicals introduced each year, at £420 million a year. Over 20 years, when on the basis of past experience one would expect to prevent 150 deaths, the total cost would be £8,400 million. Using similar calculations, the cost per life saved of recent tractor cab legislation is £110,000, of cervical cancer screening £336,000, of modifying tower blocks (after the Ronan Point disaster) £20 million, and of dispensing drugs in child-proof containers £1,000.

John Locke, the Director of the Health and Safety Executive, defined politics in his 1981 Alexander Redgrave Lecture as the formal institutions and procedures established by society to deal with differences of interest between various groups in that society. By any definition it is apparent that the allocation of resources to health services is a political matter.

Allocation of resources

In Western industrial societies there is a close correlation between gross national product and the percentage of it allocated to public and private health care. It is remarkably constant and holds for Eire, Italy, the UK, Belgium, France, Norway, West Germany and Switzerland. However, physician supply and attitudes play a considerable part in determining the distribution of this sum allocated by society to medical care exemplified by the varying rate of removal of wombs, gall bladders and tonsils and adenoids in different countries and even in different regions of the same country. There is now increasing pressure for medical services to justify costs, to define objectives and to state the priorities they set themselves. A recent Lancet editorial* says that doctors are often reluctant to test the proposition that the outcome of their actions truly helps the patient and is more than a wasteful non-event. Testing the proposition is especially important in services responsible for the supervision of health at work. In the UK two-thirds of employees have no medical supervision at work and depend on Health and Safety legislation and training in safety. Services for the remaining third vary in *per capita* cost by a factor of ten. It is especially important also in occupational health services in the public sector. Sir Douglas Wass, the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, made the point in his December 1982 lecture to the Royal Institute of Public Administration** that where managers in the Civil Service are not able to measure the service they give—the lot of Inspectors of Taxes, to give one example—the emphasis must be on securing their constant awareness of the resources they deploy to do their job.

*'Global Ethics' in *The Lancet*. January 1/8, 1983, p 33.
**'The Public Service in Modern Society', a lecture by Sir D Wass to the Royal Institute of Public Administration, 2 December 1982, reprinted in *Public Administration*. Spring 1983, pp 7–20.

The Civil Service Medical Advisory Service

The Civil Service Medical Advisory Service came into being in 1944 as the Treasury Medical Service. Like most medical institutions, our first responsibility is to provide a day-to-day service and, although occupational health surveillance has been among the duties of CSMAS since its inception, our main concerns until recently have been in the medical supervision of sickness absence and in questions relating to premature retirement on health grounds. Over 40,000 case referrals are made annually. Many can be dealt with expeditiously but some are tortuous and require fine judgement, which is time consuming. Streamlining procedures by, for example, informal discussion with managers and welfare officers rather than prolonged correspondence about cases under the rules has given us elbow room to cope with an increasing commitment to health and safety.

The scope for health surveillance in CSMAS is wide. To quote a few examples, some staff serving abroad in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other government departments are particularly vulnerable. In Moscow, Warsaw and Delhi local needs justify the appointment of a full-time British medical officer but in many other posts overseas local standards of medical care are inadequate. We try to lessen risk by careful health surveillance of staff, by immunisation and health advice and by the regular inspection of unsatisfactory posts abroad. Veterinarians working in MAFF who are exposed to animal diseases, pesticides, fungicides and other toxic chemicals are another example. Other scientists—civil servants—working in a multiplicity of research organisations are exposed to a wide range of physical, chemical and biological health hazards. We are equally concerned with more mundane health risks. Many of these are ostensibly minor seen in comparison with, say, radioactivity or toxic chemicals but the problems of heating, lighting, ventilation and air conditioning noise, and others associated with sedentary work, rank high in our priorities.

Reorganisation

No organisation such as CSMAS can provide a fully comprehensive service, if only because of the widely scattered population we serve. However, we are extending the service we provide in several ways.

- The streamlining of procedures mentioned earlier has enabled full-time CSMAS staff to leave their offices to visit work places. One afternoon's discussion at a workplace can often achieve more than weeks or months of correspondence.
- In conjunction with the Civil Service College we have begun to contribute to the training of managers in Health and Safety and in advising them in the best use of the CSMAS.

- Local Medical Officers, who are usually general practitioners working part-time for CSMAS, have since the inception of the service played an essential part in our organisation. They carry out examinations and report to our central offices. Since 1980 we have extended their functions so that they have more responsibility and a better insight into occupational health. A series of two-day courses in occupational medicine in centres throughout the UK for these doctors has been instituted.
- Nurses in the Civil Service hitherto working in sick bays and responsible to local management are being integrated into an Occupational Health Nursing Service (OHNS) located regionally as part of the CSMAS. An occupational health nursing service is an important component of any occupational health service. These nursing advisers will be responsible for identifying establishments with special hazards, undertaking surveys, making preliminary health enquiries on candidates for certain grades, education in health, and for an expanded programme of immunisation. They will assist in rehabilitation and resettlement after illness, in the training of first aid instructors and in statutory and non-statutory examinations.

Research

In these attempts to provide more effective surveillance of health at work priorities in research are also being examined. Studies of civil servants undertaken by medical research institutions have contributed to the investigation of the outcome of chronic disease in the UK and have demonstrated that differences in life style result in widely differing mortality and morbidity rates. These studies continue in, for example, the Department of the Environment, where the relationship between stress and hypertension and other risk factors is being investigated. Studies of stress in traffic wardens and in driving examiners are in train.

Although the value to medical research is unequivocal, such studies have not yet resulted in any measurable improvement in the health of civil servants. The high hopes with which the CSMAS began the London screening survey in 1975 have not been realised. Our hope then was that with early recognition of disease and appropriate advice, morbidity in the Civil Service would decrease. The survey of 53,000 London-based civil servants, made between 1975 and 1978, did indeed identify civil servants with particular risk factors. Of each thousand examined, 29 were found to have angina, 27 had electrocardiographic changes, 14 had chest disorders, 12 had raised cholesterol levels, 11 had a peptic ulcer, ten had evidence of an alcohol problem, seven had circulatory problems and two had undiagnosed diabetes. Follow-up studies, however, showed that the recognition of the disorder and appropriate intervention did not appear to

affect the outcome. In a study reported in 1982 by Professor Geoffrey Rose and his colleagues from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine,* 1,445 London-based civil servants at high risk of cardiorespiratory disease were followed up for ten years. One half were recalled for individual advice on the relation of smoking to health, and those who declared their wish to stop smoking were given support and encouragement. The remaining 731 men were not recalled or similarly advised. During the ten years follow-up period, 251 men died, 123 in the intervention group and 128 in the 'normal care' group—a non-significant difference. A recent report from the USA has confirmed these disappointing results. After ten years of enormous labour and expense the results have just been published of the US Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial** where in 22 clinical centres 361,662 male volunteers aged 35 to 57 were examined. Of these, 12,866 were judged to be at highest risk of coronary heart disease because of their cholesterol levels, their raised blood pressures and their cigarette smoking. After three extensive examinations potential recruits were randomised to 'special intervention' and 'usual care' groups. The former received personal advice on diet and smoking habits and the majority of those with raised blood pressure were given drugs. The usual care group received no special advice, although, as self-selected volunteers for a trial of heart disease, many members got the message and acted on it. With this caveat, however, the results show virtually no difference in outcome after ten years and the expenditure of $115 million. There was a seven per cent reduction in coronary heart disease mortality in the 'special intervention group' but the total mortality was one per cent higher.

Health education

These results do not imply, of course, that (for example) giving up smoking is anything but beneficial. The evidence that non-smokers are healthier and longer lived than smokers is incontrovertible. There are a great number of opportunities in the work we do in the CSMAS to bring to the notice of the individuals we see the benefits they would undoubtedly achieve if they were to give up smoking or reduce their alcohol consumption or take more exercise or modify their diets. And, of course, as health professionals we seize these opportunities. What may be deduced from these studies in the Civil Service and elsewhere is that intervention and intensive health education in a population of working age people do not produce the benefits expected. If this is so, the sooner occupational health services

*'Randomised Controlled Trial of Anti-smoking Advice: 10 year results' by G Rose and others, in *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, vol 36, pt 2, pp 102–108.

**'Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial Risk Factor Changes and Mortality Results' by the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial Research Group, US National Institute of Health, in *JAMA*, vol 248, pt 12, pp 1465–77.

reduce their commitment to such intervention and education the better, if only on the grounds of their expense. CSMAS view is that screening for conditions such as high blood pressure, cervical and breast cancer is more effectively undertaken, in the UK at any rate, by the doctors responsible for the treatment of the conditions which screening brings to light. Health education involving occupational medical services in our view is more valuable when aimed at the prevention of disorders associated with the occupation. Backache is one such civil service example, affecting those in sedentary as well as in heavy manual occupations, often due to faulty posture and one of the commonest causes of sickness absence and referral to the CSMAS. Education at the workplace can reduce morbidity and is one of our first priorities.

With the inception of OHNS, greater efforts can be made by CSMAS in first aid training. A great many people die in the UK each year for the want of elementary first aid. Elementary because no-one applied simple pressure and stopped the bleeding, or turned them over when they were unconscious or helped them to breathe with simple artificial respiration. It is obviously desirable to train as many people as possible in simple first aid procedures. The First Aid Regulations, which came into operation in July 1982, are a step forward, and doctors and nurses in the CSMAS can play their part—not in training first aiders because this might be an unjustifiable use of scarce resources, but in training first aid instructors who can pass on their skills throughout the Service.

Audit

Finally, from what has been said before, it would not be seemly to have instituted these changes in occupational health surveillance without building in some mechanism of assessing their effects. One of the complaints of the Robens Committee* in their review of occupational health services in the UK in 1972 was the lack of measures of outcome of occupational health surveillance. The position is no different today. Occupational medical services may play a small part in the preservation of health and safety at work compared with the contributions made by engineers, physicists, chemists and hygienists. Some of the benefits of services provided can, however, be measured. The outcome of the identification of groups at special risk, the amount of time people take off work because of illness, the number of lives saved, the amount of disability avoided, and the costs of using alternative services such as general practitioners or accident and emergency departments instead of the work sick bay, are all measurable. There are opportunities in the Civil Service and elsewhere to make comparisons of different methods of occupational surveillance, and CSMAS is actively involved in seeking them.

**Safety and Health at Work*. Cmnd. 5034, Chairman of the committee: Lord Robens, HMSO, 1972.

Problems and Perspectives in the Career Management of Specialists

D C Hardwick

Denis Hardwick has recently been appointed Pollution Specialist in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food after a varied career mainly in Research Councils and the Civil Service. This article is based on his recent experience in the Management and Personnel Office. It is essentially a personal view and does not attempt to deal with problems peculiar to Groups other than the Science Group.

Introduction

Three years dealing with the personnel management of civil service scientists in the Management and Personnel Office (MPO) have caused me to think very hard about how the Service uses the abilities available to it, how people are motivated to do the jobs they are given and how the organisation can be moved in a direction which will improve its efficiency. The opportunity to organise these thoughts into an article for *Management in Government* was therefore welcome, and I hope that the result will stimulate others to look for specific improvements. But, more important, I hope that it will help forward the process which the creation of the Management and Personnel Office started—a much more radical, long-term look at the Service and ways to get better value for the taxpayers' money; the time-scale of this process is long, and lasting reforms must be planned to match this time-scale. Neither individual Ministers nor individual civil servants are in appropriate jobs long enough to see the

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whole process through, so there must be a collective and continuing commitment for any change, a policy which, though modified by events from time to time, can be handled on as a basis for concerted and meaningful action.

These are personal views. I have consulted colleagues in MPO, and their comments and criticisms have helped me to improve the article. But no one else has any responsibility for the views expressed. Many comments refer more particularly to scientists but all specialisms can pose career management problems. Lessons learnt in one specialism might help others and it is worth following the argument through.

Table—Specialist Groups in the Civil Service

	Staff in post 1.4.82	*Number of grades**
Actuaries	32	5
Cartographic & Recording Draughtsmen	3,350	4
Data Processors	8,300	3
Economists	360	4
Fire Service Officers	158	5
Graphics Officers	454	6†
Information Officers	1,153	6
Instructional Officers	5,797	6
Legal Group (England and Wales)	808	3†
Librarians	396	5
Marine Service Officers	553	5
Medical Officers	626	3
Museum Conservators	72	6
Museum Curators	491	8
Museum Technicians	141	4
Museum Wardens	635	6
Nurses	348	6
Photographers	583	6
Photoprinters	3,316	6
Professional & Technical Officers	37,312	8†
Psychologists	249	4
Publication Sales Staff	46	2
Radio Technicians	910	1†
Research Officers	361	5
Scientists	15,815	8
Secretaries & Typists	26,599	8†
Security Officers	1,820	5
Statisticians	480	4†
Technical Works Engineers	43	2
Telecommunications Officers	1,216	5
Tracers	174	3†

Omitted: Car Drivers, Cleaners, Drawing Office Assistants, Laboratory Attendants, Messengers, Office Keepers, Paper Keepers, Police (MOD), Process and General Supervisors, Reproducers, Social Security Local Officers, Stores Officers and Supervisors, Telephonists and Teleprinter Operators and departmental grades.

*For comparison the Administration Group has 11 grades.

†Plus a 'cadet' or 'trainee' grade.

What is a specialist?

The title of this article contains an assumption that there is a clearly defined category of 'specialist' which is meaningful and useful. The main specialist groups in the Civil Service are listed in the table. Within a few of the groups (for example Scientists, Professional and Technical Officers) there is a wide range of different specialists: a scientist analysing animal feeds in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) would find it difficult—perhaps impossible—to transfer to quality control of semi-conductors in the Ministry of Defence—or even to fish ecology in MAFF itself. On the other hand, an economist, lawyer, secretary or photographer could often move readily between departments because the essential specialist requirements are the same. So one problem is that for some specialists, but not for others, civil service groupings do not necessarily correspond to groupings useful for personnel management purposes. And some jobs cannot be readily assigned to one group or another because they need abilities drawn from two or more groups. Senior posts with increasing managerial and policy functions are less sharply differentiated than the more junior posts.

Another problem we face is the very great range of specialisms. Some are craft specialists who obtain their training at specialist schools or courses—draughtsmen and data processors are examples—and such people provide a specific service to meet a clearly-defined, generally continuing need. Others are conventionally post-graduate and normally have some 'professional' connotation—either a clearly designated professional structure with central supervising bodies or a more loosely knit sense of professional ethic. Within the Service this is often (but not universally) recognised by having designated Heads of Profession—some service-wide, others within individual departments. The degree of managerial control of such professional people varies widely; the pure research scientist is recognised as a creative person who works best with very loose guidelines, but such people form a minority among the Science Group. In contrast, legal experts generally work to a clearly defined brief and apply professional skills to problems imposed by the system.

Given this great variety, can we define the essence of a 'specialist'? A simple definition might be someone who on recruitment or before promotion is required to have a specific skill needed by an employer whether at a craft or a professional level. In contrast, administrators are reckoned to develop their abilities by experience and training during their early years on the job. But specialists will also continue to develop their abilities in useful ways (which can include developing administrative abilities) during their career. And generalist administrators are, at entry, tested for suitable characteristics developed by their education. So any distinction between developing skills before entry (specialists) and

developing skills after entry (generalists) is blurred in reality. Within the civil service Administration Group, functional specialisms—automatic data processing staff and, more recently, accountants—further blur the distinction. There are also other areas of administration which require some specialised experience and where it would not be efficient to have too much movement in and out of particular areas of work. It has long been recognised that administrators are characterised by the department they serve and, often, within that department the work that they have been engaged in for most of their time (a 'Treasury man'; a 'local government man' in DOE). Advising ministers has long been recognised as a specialism (involving relatively few); and management of work areas is becoming increasingly seen as an important specialist area.

But specialism, while increasing an officer's usefulness in the immediate future, limits both the number of posts available and the chances of reaching high office with responsibilities outside the specialist field. Normally, it is generalists in high office who are expected to take charge of groups which include both specialist and generalist work.

The generalist/specialist dichotomy may be illustrated by a contradiction in the Fulton Report.* On the one hand it was argued that government administrators are not dilettante amateurs but highly trained professionals (paras 31–32); on the other, that specialists can, while practising their specialism, obtain enough administrative experience to compete with such highly trained professionals (paras 224, 231). Fulton, in advocating a fully unified service, may have missed an opportunity to examine the roots of this paradox and, in particular, whether either complete unification or the present sharp division into generalists and specialists made sense in terms of the best way to do the work needed by government. Perhaps, at the lower levels at least, we are all specialists nowadays.

The history of, and the need for, the distinction between generalists and specialists in the Service deserves an article to itself. But discussion of the career management of specialists and ways of improving it must take into account the existence of this distinction and the possible modifications of it. The majority of specialist officers remain within their specialist groups, doing specialist work to meet departmental needs; for these, management is mainly concerned with maintaining motivation. Management also needs to plan ahead to fill senior specialist posts, to cope with changes in needs and with changes in the ability of specialists to meet those needs. The barriers between specialists and generalists, reduced though they are, still create difficulties in moving specialists into administrative posts to solve such problems. And, as I have argued below, the cost/benefit analysis of

*_The Civil Service_. Report of the Committee chaired by Lord Fulton, Cmnd. 3638, HMSO, 1968.

the various solutions to removing specialists where necessary from their specialist posts should be done.

In private industry and commerce, the distinction between specialists and generalists is not so sharp, although it exists. It is more pervasive in some ways: there are specialisms such as sales which have little parallel in most of the Civil Service, and other areas—personnel management for example—which are paralleled by administrators in the Service. In the private sector, however, there are fewer formal limitations to the jobs for which an employee can be considered—if it appears to the firm's and the individual's advantage, any move can be made without any problems. In some specialisms—certainly for scientists—the larger firms at any rate take considerable trouble to identify potential 'high flyers' in their early years of service and give them testing experiences to evaluate their capabilities. The firms are aware that wrong choices for senior posts can be very expensive.

Of course the grass is always greener on the other side. But industrial management has not been universally successful. For example, the management of Rolls Royce in the 1960s was largely in the hands of engineers, and the history of their investment decisions during that period repays study. Industry may not be better than the Civil Service but it is different and we might learn from the differences.

Contraction and expansion

Accepting that a specialist enters with professional or craft skills well developed, then government needs for any particular specialism can be readily defined at a particular time. But changes in Government policy imply changes in the need for specialists—more accountants, fewer civil engineers for example. One of the most difficult problems of specialist career management comes in deploying surplus specialists when the need for them as specialists has diminished.

It is of course always the wrong time to change the system. In time of expansion, the pressures to organise efficiently are lessened; in times of contraction, policy change is resisted because everyone is defensive. The immediate problems of coping with specialists during contractions are considerable and they are well illustrated in the 1982 report by the Advisory Board for the Research Council.*

> 'Where permanent [scientific] staff and institutions are involved, the difficulties are obvious; change takes time (and money) to manage efficiently (para 34). Although Councils have mobility clauses in their employment contracts, it is in practice more difficult to redeploy or retrain staff in some

*_The Science Budget: a Forward Look 1982._ A Report to the Secretary of State for Education and Science from the Advisory Board for Research Councils, ABRC, 1982, para 34.

> disciplines than in others (para 35). Good research must make way for better. The effect on staff is a particular area of concern as retirements and natural movement may not coincide with requirements and current personnel policies may be restrictive. Recruitment of 'new blood' is necessary to maintain research vitality and an overall balance in age profile. Premature retirements (or redundancy ultimately) . . . are necessary in individual situations in order to achieve the right mix of disciplines and specialisms in any one particular area given the work in hand. However, employment legislation may present a major constraint (para 36)'.

I have quoted this *in extenso* because, though it refers to bodies outside the Civil Service proper, these have similar conditions of service to those in government, and the argument applies equally to specialists within the Service.

I would draw two morals. First, we have to build more flexibility into the system and then ensure that flexibility is used where needed. Mobility clauses, for example, have rarely been enforced although they were provided as an element of flexibility. Secondly, we must recognise that periods of expansion and contraction are likely to alternate, that stability is not a normal condition and that, in times of expansion, the ensuring contraction must be allowed for. For specialists in particular, technologies may appear and disappear. This is part of the long-term thinking that I referred to at the beginning of this article. It is particularly significant for career management of specialists because the contraction/expansion cycle is likely to be much less than the 30–40 years of a full career, and specialists have inherently less flexibility than generalists.

The deployment of specialists

Three possible career pathways within the Service are open to specialists. First, they may continue to provide their specialism perhaps with some retraining throughout their careers as the great majority of specialists do; for these, promotion opportunities will be delimited by opportunities to practise their specialism at the higher level. Most senior posts within the specialism form the second pathway; these will generally have wider responsibilities such as management or policy advice. Finally, officers may leave their specialism entirely—they may enter another specialism but, more commonly, they enter the Administration Group at an appropriate level. (Of course, in the Open Structure at Under Secretary level and above there is no distinction between the second and third pathway.)

Specialists are, by definition, 'narrow'—less flexible than generalists—and, because the number of posts in a particular specialism may well

decline within an officer's career period (see above), thought should be given to retraining him or her in a related specialism more in need of staff: for example, drawing staff could be retrained as technical surveyors or *vice versa*. Retraining for new technologies related to the original expertise of the officer might also make good use of his talent. This could have the benefit of retaining within the Service an expertise which might again be needed within the lifetime of the specialist concerned. As future changes cannot be predicted with any certainty, it is important to encourage specialists not to become too specialised—to retain the ability to change their field of expertise. Government has no remit to retain experts in fields which do not fulfil a government need.

The most difficult problem for personnel management is what to do with those specialists who are, for some reason, no longer needed even with retraining. There might be benefits in retaining them within the specialist ambit in some quasi-managerial role. This must, of course, be a needed function—management hierarchies must not be erected simply to accommodate surplus or ageing staff. Given the posts, however, is it most efficient to fill them with those no longer needed in their specialism? The balance of benefit is difficult to assess but the easy solution of moving staff into 'administration' may not be the most efficient solution.

Secondly, specialists who are no longer needed or who are not up-to-date (that is, not able effectively to utilise the latest technological information) could be moved into generalist jobs. There are two problems here. First, that such specialists would not always be among the most capable of their specialist group and, therefore, may not be as able as the administrators with whom they would be competing for such generalist posts—mediocre specialists would not normally be expected to make first rate administrators. Secondly, the specialist, however able, would not have had the training and experience which are considered essential for the formation of a highly professional generalist administrator. Therefore, on both ability and experience the specialist is not, in general, likely to meet government needs in an administrative job as efficiently as a trained administrator.

In considering the deployment of specialists into generalist areas, there is a basic conflict of management. On the one hand there is the efficient running of the organisation—doing the work at minimum cost. On the other is the concern for the employee and some concept of what is 'fair' to him or her. During years of expansion, these conflicts can be reconciled without undue strain but, at other times many expectations—the idea that the employees have a 'right' to promotion, for example—will not be realised. The first duty of management is to manage efficiently. On the other hand, for Government there are wider considerations of public policy (see below).

Science and technology present a particularly difficult case in deciding who are no longer needed. The development of new ideas is on a short timescale compared with the 30 to 40 years of a specialist's career. It is seen as essential to maintain an entry of young specialists recently educated at the frontiers of science.*

The Tavistock Institute did a cost benefit study** of staffing policies for government scientists. It included the alternatives of retaining middle-aged scientists within the specialism, retiring them or transferring them to administration. The Report concluded that transfer could give benefits up to 13 per cent in costs but did not take into account any cost of administrative work being less well done by a non-administrator—it implies that any reasonably intelligent specialist can quickly pick up administrative techniques at a senior level; and this is inconsistent with the Fulton comment that administrators are a highly trained profession. How easily can specialists pick up generalist administration techniques?

The situation for scientists has given rise to an image of the 'burnt out research scientist'—the person who has not kept sufficiently up-to-date with his subject and who could, with advantage, be replaced by a junior more *au fait* with current developments. The Tennant Committee*** rejected this concept, pointing out that the number of senior scientists no longer able to make an effective contribution was no larger than for other groups; but they did not discuss the particular problem of 'keeping up-to-date' with current scientific developments.

In other specialisms, for example law or economics, the need for an influx of those with new concepts is less, and intake at junior levels can be matched to needs over a longer time-scale. Even here, however, manpower studies have shown the need to maintain a balanced spread of ages if difficulties are not to arise in future years. This implies maintaining a flow of recruits at a junior level even in periods of contraction and taking in a wide mix of ages in times of expansion.

The possibility of recruiting specialists with an eye to their subsequent administrative ability has some attractions. But there are two dangers: first-rate specialists may be rejected because they appear too narrow; and the criteria to judge such long-term general ability seem far from clear. Although not attractive at first sight, the possibility should be studied in greater depth if only to clarify what characters we should select for in specialists.

I should also mention the possibility of reversion to a lower grade where an officer is working below the level appropriate to the grade held.

*See quotation and footnote on page 108.

**_Staffing Policies for Scientists in Government Laboratories._ Report by the Tavistock Institute and the Civil Service Department, 1974 (internal, unpublished report).

***_Organisation of the Scientific Civil Service._ Chairman: Sir M Tennant, HMSO, 1965.

Although available, this procedure is very rarely used. For people promoted beyond their abilities—or even 'burnt out specialists' if they exist—this could be useful in providing others with career opportunities. But it could undermine trust in personnel management—the occasional mistake in promotion is inevitable but any widespread use would suggest a failure of management.

Efficient performance of current work

Monitoring current performance and motivating individuals to give of their best is an essential element of personnel management. For professional specialists, the quality of work is often monitored by fellow professionals (for example referees of scientific papers) and professional acceptance provides a strong motivation to maintain a professional standard. Motivation, however, to serve departmental needs as distinct from serving professional standards is also important and requires active management.

The relevance of work to departmental policy may be easier to appreciate where specialists such as lawyers and economists are involved centrally with administrators in the pursuit of policy but may be more difficult for isolated professional groups such as scientists (and perhaps other specialists) away from the centre. The importance of motivation to serve government has in some instances been given a subordinate role and specialists have been led to emphasise their professional duties at the expense of their duty to their employer in a way almost unknown in industry. For example they may prefer not to prepare policy papers but instead to retain their 'objectivity' and to use their time on purely professional work.

An important factor here is the sharp distinction (discussed earlier) drawn between specialists and generalists. In some cases, parallel hierarchies of specialists and generalists serve one function and, rightly or wrongly, the specialist can feel watched over and not trusted to understand and operate the policy the specialist work serves. This is strongly demotivating and may be the cause of the retreat into a professional shell described above. It has contributed, no doubt, to the comment that specialists are 'on tap, not on top'. This can also affect the development of wider abilities in specialists (see below).

Recently Sir Derek Rayner, in an examination of the support for R&D*, considered that scientists had too little responsibility for the resources that they used—administrators usually looked after the Accounting Officer's interests. The Rayner conclusion could be applied to other specialists who should be more responsible for the resources that they use. At present there is little or no incentive for many specialists to keep expenditure to a

*'The Review of R&D Support Services' by A Payne, in *Management in Government*. November 1982, pp 241 – 249.

minimum. Specialists are already used in integrated hierarchies and some specialists are organised in hierarchies with no parallel administrators—some, like the Meteorological Office, run major organisations with virtually no administrators. Therefore giving specialists more administrative responsibility for their resources would not be a change of principle but of practice.

The need for levels in a hierarchy and for either specialist or managerial work at particular levels varies greatly from specialism to specialism and, indeed, within specialisms. For research scientists, for example, the 'organic' system of management described by Harrison* is often appropriate. In this '... Communication between people of different ranks tends to resemble lateral consultation rather than vertical command. Individuals tend to be differentiated on the basis of knowledge and capability rather than rank or position. There is also a high degree of participation by subordinates in the setting of objectives and the making of decisions, especially as they affect the individual'. Thus a hierarchy of command is not really appropriate. But this does not necessarily apply in the same degree to non-research uses of scientists or to others such as Professional and Technical staff. Some—radio technicians for example—need very few grades; others will need more.

In using the word 'hierarchy' I do not imply that every work situation needs a complete complement of grades. As the Table indicates, specialists often have less need of hierarchic organisation than administrators. Grades may be used to provide appropriate salary levels rather than rankings of authority (see quotation from Harrison above). Unfortunately job descriptions are often written to maintain some facade of hierarchical responsibility because the situation has not been fully understood. Better analysis of what specialists' jobs require—and what supervision they require—is essential if we are to escape ingrained habits of thought.The numbers of grades have not always stemmed from structural needs. Where specialists develop skills during their career which make them more useful to government—more able to meet government needs—they should, in equity, be paid more. This has been done by promoting them up a hierarchy rather than simply paying them more. Civil service structures confuse these two needs of management and in the Scientific Civil Service the problem has been overtly recognised. Here, improved abilities can be rewarded by promotion in a 'fluidly graded post' (up to Principal Scientific Officer—PSO) or by individual merit promotion (above PSO). In effect, the salary range for a given post has been greatly expanded although, formally, the officer still moves up the graded hierarchy. Currently, ways of distinguishing higher payments given for doing a particular job better from

*'The Management of Scientists' by F Harrison, in *Academy of Management Journal*. June 1974, pp 234–241.

such payments given in recognition of greater management responsibility are being studied in the context of the Megaw Report.*

It is notable that private industry has also used the individual merit promotion to solve the problem of giving good technical people a career without promoting them out of their specialism.** But the situation is not entirely comparable because in private industry the norm has been for able scientists to move into management.

Much has been written about motivation generally and it would not be possible within the ambit of this article to analyse fully the motivation of specialists, whether professionals or craftsmen, or how to improve their motivation. Two important motivators are recognised as the prospect of future advancement and the satisfaction of doing the present job well. As a generalisation (and no doubt all could find exceptions) the former has predominated over the latter in the Civil Service, in spite of the obvious fact that, in a pyramid hierarchy with fewer and fewer posts nearer the top, advancement will be restricted—particularly so for specialists with less need for hierarchies of management than administrators. Most specialists will serve all their careers in their specialism at a fairly modest level (it is important to efficiency that they do) and it seems to me essential to emphasise the second motivation—satisfaction in a job well done. This implies ensuring that all know that what they have contributed has met the needs it was intended to serve.

This is a quite general point but the need for motivating specialists in their current job is often overlooked because it is assumed that their specialism gives them 'job satisfaction'. They cannot be moved to the stimulus of a new environment as easily as administrators can (although some departments, like the Laboratory of the Government Chemist, try to arrange this) and the possibilities of promotion are less than for administrators. Therefore they must get the fullest satisfaction possible from their present work at all levels. The need for such motivation should be one aspect of the need for improved career management for specialists.

Preparation for senior management

Some specialists should be prepared for future senior posts within their specialism. The numbers required may be small but they should be provided for. There may well be considerable overlap here with posts having wider, administrative duties and, for maximum flexibility, it is advisable to train those intended for high office on the assumption that some of their duties will be administrative in nature. Selection and preparation of individuals depends on a good description of the work

**Inquiry into Civil Service Pay*. Cmnd. 8590, Chairman: Sir J Megaw, HMSO, 1982.
**'Dual Ladders in Research' by H P Gunz in *R&D Management*. June 1980, pp 113–117.

required in senior posts and of the qualities of individual officers in a way that the two can be related. Currently those descriptions are still at an early stage of development and personnel divisions are, of necessity, forced in the short term to plug holes with people without necessarily achieving the best possible fit; longer term career management requires the development of succession planning techniques. But succession planning is unlikely to be as effective as it should be unless people can be matched to jobs more effectively. This is particularly true of specialists (like scientists) who have less opportunity than generalists to move to different posts and acquire broader experience of Government management.

At present, much of the detail of career management of specialists is in the hands of specialist officers who are only one or two grades higher and who may have little conception outside their specialism of what the Service is about or what the future may bring. Senior officers, and particularly personnel divisions and central departments, should therefore play a more active role in guiding individual specialists about their potential roles and helping them to prepare for possible futures. High flyers, in particular need to be recognised at an early stage—and to recognise in themselves their potential for a wider career. Communication seems to me to be the key here. For the Science Group, MPO has produced a booklet* which aims to meet some of these needs but even for scientists (who have often been the most vocal of specialist groups in looking for better career management) a long road of experiments and questioning lies ahead. We are aware of the problems of motivation and of career guidance and of the need for better communication both ways; but we are still struggling to discover the most effective ways to tackle the problems in detail.

Increasingly, personnel management divisions must, I think, change from employment agencies, plugging holes with people as best they can, into career managements sustaining a body of people flexible enough to change as needs change. This concept has always applied to that small central corps of administrators who advise Ministers on policy. It must be applied more widely to the many other specialists who have the potential to contribute even more effectively to government needs.

Specialists/Administrators

Some middle level specialists have been moved into generalist posts with a view to giving them administrative experience, but the result has often been to deprive them of the continuing specialist experience considered necessary for promotion in their specialism without qualifying them for promotion into the Administration Group.

Increasingly, in senior posts, there is a need for a combination of

**Careers and Career Management in the Scientific Civil Service.* Management and Personnel Office, 1983.

specialist knowledge and administrative ability—what I refer to as hybrid posts. At lower levels, such a combination may well be provided by mixed teams of specialists and administrators—although it should be remarked that, even if this is done, effective communication within a team presupposes that each member has some appreciation of the other's field of expertise, and that the specialist appreciates what the administrative colleagues are about (and *vice versa*). This reinforces the need for specialists to be given more opportunity to see how their work relates to the total operation of their departments generally.

At more senior levels, the administrative and specialist abilities are generally better united in one person who brings to the job more than either a specialist or a generalist, as such, can provide. It is in such hybrid posts that division into specialist and generalist is most clearly seen to be too simplistic. The problem has been recognised at Under Secretary and above and the distinction abolished in the Open Structure. Whether such unification could usefully be extended has been much discussed. Clearly, there are posts below Under Secretary which would be appropriate, although most posts in specialist areas could not be filled by people without the appropriate specialist qualifications and experience (as indeed applies to some in the Open Structure). Already, the concept of 'opportunity posts' provides for posts which have a hybrid character, although the terminology is somewhat misleading; the opportunity is really for management to select the best man for the job across two or more discipline groups, not for someone without the right abilities to acquire them by occupying the post. Wider opportunities for movement, properly used, could provide management with greater flexibility in deploying staff provided that they know how to use it. But this would be flexibility largely at the margin and only for important senior posts. Most specialists would remain specialists and most administrative jobs are best filled by trained administrators.

Any move towards greater flexibility would sharpen the need to describe specialists' potential clearly for the full range of posts for which they were credible candidates. Such a description is of particular importance where there are senior posts requiring abilities commonly found in two or more groupings (particularly specialist/administrative). The need for scientists in such posts was clearly spelled out in the Holdgate Report.* The Government has undertaken to ensure that sufficient scientists are prepared for posts requiring administrative as well as scientific abilities.

A non-career service

Practical alternatives to the civil service career concept should also be

**The Review of the Scientific Civil Service (1980).* Cmnd. 8032, Chairman: Dr M W Holdgate, HMSO, 1980.

evaluated to see whether they provide useful, cost-effective flexibility in deploying specialists. Much has been written about the career-service concept in relation to the higher administrators, and the value of a greater exchange between the government and other employees has been recognised. Other nations (USA and France for example) show that this can be done but do not show how to change from current UK practice. Starting from here, how do we get there while keeping the Service efficient during the transition?

The possibility of engaging specialists for a fixed period—say five, ten or twenty years—is attractive particularly in those areas of science and technology which are thought to benefit from a sustained influx of newly trained experts. However, government's responsibilities as employer cannot be divorced from government's responsibilities to the community at large. Other employers do not need to concern themselves about the wider effects of dismissing employees who are no longer needed by the organisation—although some do and current legislation limits the ability of all to dismiss staff. But government has wider responsibilities which, unlike other employers, it cannot avoid and the balance of judgement between efficient government and general employment policy would be a matter for Ministers. Should second-rate or redundant scientists be thrown on to the national scrap heap at 40 or 45? Should government efficiency be reduced by continuing to employ scientists who are not needed?

There are parallels in the armed forces which have a 'short service commission' providing early retirement, with suitable pension arrangements and opportunities for re-employment if government needs require it. The net cost at first glance, might seem considerable, but further analysis is necessary to establish this. The Tavistock Study* found that early leaving for scientists offered no benefits to government either using fixed-term contracts or current (1974) redundancy rates. Another possibility is to pay higher rates to those on short commissions as 'compensation' for the uncertainty of their future. It would be difficult to put a general figure on the differential, and the general consensus is that the less certain employment in industry does not attract higher salaries.

There may be a danger in any 'free market' approach that those in the Service who are most able will be most marketable. They will tend to leave the Service in larger numbers than the less able and the field from which to select future senior managers within the Service would be impoverished. On the other hand, if the Service was attractive enough to middle management outside, such a deficiency could be countered by buying in suitable people for senior posts. This is already done to some degree in the Scientific Civil Service.

**Staffing Policies for Scientists in Government Laboratories.* Report by the Tavistock Institute and the Civil Service Department, 1974, not published.

A break clause in what is essentially a career contract might be a useful approach. This could be essentially no different from the situation now, when unsatisfactory service can be a basis for dismissal. In principle the basis for terminating contracts could be so widened as to reduce or remove any opprobrium; eventually, it could be accepted as normal for scientists (and perhaps other specialists) to move to jobs outside the Service; but, again, during any transition period, there would be problems.

In general, employing scientists who would be useful for only part of their career involves extra expense whether they are retained beyond their useful period within the Science Group, moved to other work, or 'pensioned off' by some means. It is not obvious that any single procedure is cheaper than the others so it may not matter which is chosen. The Tavistock Study may be right that, overall, moving to non-science work is cost effective, retaining 'on the fringe' accumulated experience of the individual. Alongside the hybrid posts discussed above, there may be a need for those with modest scientific ability to work in science administrative posts.

Conclusion

Having borne with me through this discursive account of the career management of specialists, the reader deserves—and I would like to provide—some clear, incisive conclusions, pointing the way forward for personnel management policy. However, in such a complex organisation as the Civil Service, tidy, simplistic solutions can be a snare and a delusion, and it would be misleading and dangerous to present a single nostrum for all our ills. Only patient, painstaking analysis of problems—problems often obscured by nomenclatures and by habits of thought—and the evolving of practical solutions for specific difficulties are likely to lead to realistic improvements in efficiency and morale and in the flexibility to meet future needs. But that analysis and those solutions should be pursued consistently—relentlessly—over the years.

Instead, I can only suggest a decalogue of topics that could provide the agenda for improving the personnel management of specialists in the future:

- More effective use of man-power planning and succession planning.
- More involvement of senior staff, of departmental personnel divisions and of central personnel management in the career management of specialists.
- Better communication with individuals to ensure that they are aware of the possible careers open to them and of the possibility that they may have to move, in some degree, away from their initial specialism during their career.

- The need for a distinction between rewards for doing specialist work better with advancing experience, on the one hand, and promotion in a managerial hierarchy on the other.
- Better description both of jobs and of the potential of staff to do those jobs in order to enable personnel divisions better to fit staff to jobs. (This is particularly important in that minority of cases where specialists are to be moved to jobs outside their specialism.)
- Recognition that some posts need both specialist and administrative skills, and moves to ensure that some of the best young specialists are suitably equipped to take on these responsibilities. Generalist posts might, with advantage, also be filled from time to time by those with specialist backgrounds who have had appropriate training, without detriment to their careers.
- Acceptance that it is unlikely to be efficient to move specialists into administrative work just because specialist abilities are no longer needed or they think that they would like a change. There is not a large pool of senior administrative posts which specialists could take over; nor would it be efficient to create posts because there are staff capable of filling them. The criterion of staffing must always be the needs of government.
- Consideration of the essentially short-term nature of some specialist work and evaluation of possible solutions such as 'period appointments', 'short service commissions', moving to other (generalist) work, reversion or redundancy within the present system.
- Examination of the basis of the distinction between generalists and specialists. What are the implications of a greater degree of flexibility in principle available through a reduction of barriers between specialist groups and the Administration Group?
- The implications of successive periods of expansion and periods of contraction for structures and procedures. Contraction is less easy in specialist work because specialists can be deployed in fewer alternative jobs than generalists. The implications of this should be worked out and suitable strategies prepared.

Claiming Supplementary Benefit by Post

M J Took

Michael Took is a Principal in charge of the Forms Unit in the Department of Health and Social Security.

Most of the information needed to process the many millions of claims made each year for the various social security benefits is collected by post. The exception is supplementary benefit where the amount of information needed to determine claims is significantly more than for other social security benefits. In general, this information is collected at interviews, either in the claimants' homes or at local social security offices.

Such a procedure is very cumbersome and staff-intensive, and DHSS felt recently that there was scope both for improving efficiency and achieving some staff savings. The Department therefore decided to experiment with a postal claiming system for unemployed supplementary benefit claimants. The target was the saving of 1,000 posts. To achieve this figure it was essential to have a well-designed form which would make the new procedure work, and to try it out in a pilot exercise.

The postal claiming system

Instead of formally claiming supplementary benefit on a simple form and later being interviewed in a local social security office, the plan was that unemployed claimants should be given a comprehensive postal claim form at their unemployment benefit office. This form would be completed by claimants and sent to the local social security office. Any queries or difficulties in completing the form would be attended to by the office.

Although the system sounded simple, much effort was devoted to making it work efficiently. The first stage was the development and trial of a pilot form.

The pilot form

The first form produced was designed by HMSO from DHSS specifications. It was a very attractive-looking form. The main text was in brown, with green as a second colour. A green tint was also used as a background

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colour, with white areas being left for claimants' responses. The form's appearance was very favourably commented on by the public, but it did have some problems. First, the small format (half foolscap) chosen by DHSS meant insufficient space could be left between the two columns used on each page. The form itself was eight pages long and folded concertina-fashion—more than two feet wide when fully opened.

The pilot exercise

This was carried out in 12 areas over a three-month period. Close monitoring showed that two-thirds of claimants who were asked said they preferred the postal claiming system. DHSS staff, however, were shown to have mixed views.

The number of usable forms returned by claimants during this exercise was about 50 per cent (although if strict usability criteria had been applied, this would have been as low as 30 per cent). One thing was clear—a much better claim form would be needed if the system was to operate successfully. It also became apparent that a simpler version of the form was needed for school leavers, who found many of the questions on the pilot form inapplicable to them.

Designing and testing the postal claim form

The task of redesigning and testing the postal claim form was given to the new DHSS forms unit (at that stage in embryo). The unit decided to put the evaluation and redesign of the pilot version out to tender. The Textual Communication Research Group of the Open University was subsequently awarded the contract.

The Open University had to work to tight time constraints. This also put DHSS officials under similar pressure—they often had to respond to queries and suggestions at least within a matter of hours, if not immediately. Much time was spent at joint meetings between DHSS and the Open University.

The Open University produced three versions of the form, each building on the one before. Each was tested with a small number of suitable members of the public.

Version 1

The object of the first version was to get the language, content and question order right. It substantially changed the content, language, logic and layout of the pilot form, but was not intended as anything more than a test version. The text was generated by an IBM Extronic Composer, and the form was simply printed black on white paper. The people chosen for testing each filled in the form and were then interviewed by Open University researchers. Some of the people were given case studies so that all parts of the form could be tested; others used their own data.

The results of the tests showed that most of the problems encountered on the pilot form had been overcome. One major problem remained—that of routing instructions being ignored, with the result that some people were attempting to supply irrelevant information.

Version 2

Much thought and work went into this 'signposting' aspect. A second version was subsequently produced and tested and showed that the problem had been overcome. This was mainly due to the development of a comprehensive system of 'signposts' which clearly showed when sections applied, and to whom.

Version 3—the main form

After the test versions, several successive drafts of of what was to become the new postal claim form were produced. The later drafts were printed on white foolscap paper—the size being dictated by the size of existing casepaper holders—with mauve as a background colour. Crisp black print helped make the type stand out. The form was laid out in a two-column format over six sides and used almost 50 per cent more space than the pilot version. The typeface chosen was Gill Sans, one of the most legible.

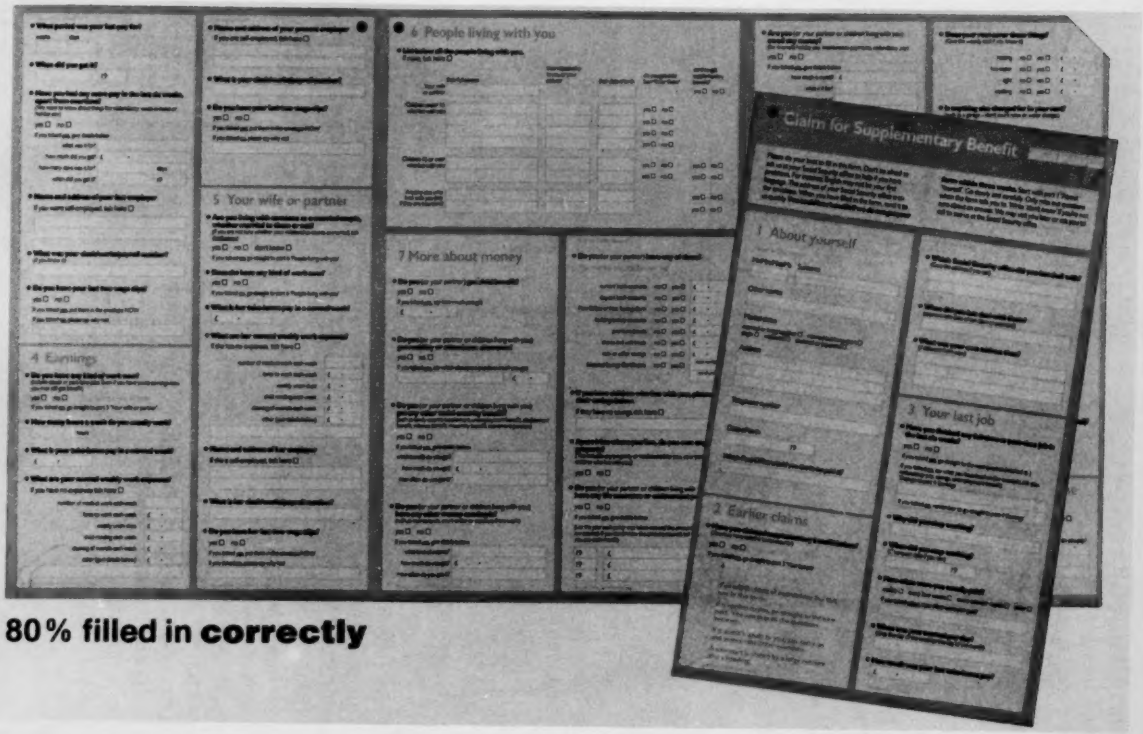
The aim of both typography and layout was to provide an unambiguous and systematic path for the user to follow. Coloured rules and a tinted background, with white space for reply, reinforced the message. This aspect was important, especially on such a long form. Without it users would encounter 'form fillers' fatigue' and would be likely to make more errors. The greater the number of errors, the less efficient the form.

The results of the testing of the main form were much more satisfactory than those for the pilot form, with 72 per cent of forms being regarded as usable. This compared with 50 per cent (or even 30 per cent) for the pilot form and an 80 per cent target towards which the Open University were working.

National implementation

DHSS Ministers decided that as a result of the general success of the postal system during the pilot exercise and the improvements made to the final version of the new form (bringing its effectiveness rate to about 80 per cent) national implementation should start from 6 December 1982. This enabled the target of 1,000 posts to be saved from that date. A bonus was that some additional work was also able to be reduced, and as a consequence, extra posts could be made available to provide a better service to the public.

National implementation is being carefully monitored. If the success of the postal claiming system is confirmed, and the early indications are that



80% filled in correctly

this is the case, the possibility of extending it to other groups of claimants will be considered. If this happens, care will be taken to ensure that in any postal system for claiming supplementary benefits, claimants are encouraged to seek help in filling in their forms if they need it. Claimants have to provide a substantial amount of information, and this may not be an easy task for a small, but significant, number of people, especially those with low reading ability.

Time and effort

It took from June 1981 to December 1982 to develop this form; that is:

- development of the pilot form within DHSS—six months;
- design by HMSO—three months;
- pilot exercise—three months;
- evaluation of pilot exercise and development of the main form—six months.

We estimate, maybe conservatively, that overall it took five man-years of development effort including eight man-months of Open University time.

A form for school leavers

The Open University also designed a simpler version of the postal claim form for use by school leavers. It consists of two pages of foolscap, one third of the size of the main form. Colour and style also follow the main form. This form for school leavers has also been tested and has achieved an effectiveness rate of more than 80 per cent.

Conclusions

One point stands out above all else. It takes very considerable time and effort to produce good forms. But good forms will repay this time and effort.

In the case of the supplementary benefit postal claim form—which is in any case exceptional in its content—the effort has been well worthwhile, both to staff and to claimants. Not only is the form effective, but it combines this with a pleasant appearance. Indeed, one claimant commented that it did not look official enough!

Testing is also vital to the successful development of any form. It is only through testing that problems in use can be identified. Proper testing means swift identification of such problem areas.

The Hoskyns-Wass Debate

Sir John Hoskyns was formerly the senior Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister. Sir Douglas Wass retired at the end of March 1983 from the post of Permanent Secretary to the Treasury.

Last October Sir John Hoskyns delivered a lecture*, the purpose of which was to persuade his audience of the need for change in Whitehall and Westminster. He presented his proposals against the background of a long period of relative economic decline preceding the present government which had seen the main purpose of its five-year term as one of financial stabilisation to be accompanied by a radical re-thinking of the measures needed for recovery. They related to three aspects of government: the need for policy objectives; the culture of Westminster and Whitehall; and the political neutrality of the Civil Service.

Policy objectives

As Sir John saw the situation, governments had failed to set policy objectives in terms that were really of any use to the Civil Service. Conduct rather than results had thus become the criterion for judging performance. Setting objectives for a government's total strategy was obviously extremely difficult. But it was worthwhile and necessary.

Without objectives, there could be no strategy—the working out of a route from one state of affairs to another. And without objectives and strategy, no leadership. All three were necessary for morale. This was a real problem for the Civil Service because it could not, by definition, provide its own objectives, strategy or leadership; this was a job for Ministers.

The reluctance to set objectives was due to lack of competence and thus of confidence. Because it would be intellectually demanding, people were faint-hearted about it. Before 1979 many Ministers had not recognised the need. Many had felt unable to tackle the problem; and they lacked the experience to know that setting policy objectives would prove worthwhile.

**Westminster and Whitehall, an Outsider's View.* A speech by Sir J Hoskyns given at the Institute of Fiscal Studies, 12 October 1982.

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The Westminster/Whitehall culture

Ministers were asked for their opinions on every conceivable topic and could quickly start to feel infallible, become reluctant to admit error and hence slow to learn. They were, of course, under intense pressure and were faced with a choice between achieving something and just surviving politically; and in their formative years they were greatly influenced by the Permanent Secretaries of their departments.

Few civil servants, particularly those over the age of 45, believed that the country could be saved. The total commitment of senior officials was required to solve the country's problems but the convention of political neutrality prevented them from giving this. Young civil servants of high ability spent too long on trivial tasks and their potential was thus not properly developed.

The Civil Service was thus a very special institutional case, almost closed to outsiders, lacking the confidence and energy that came from success and serving political masters with whom it had often disagreed. There was a need for fresh thinking and new people and skills.

Sir John's overwhelming impression of government was of a small world; of outsiders kept out of the Civil Service by salary levels; of the Cabinet formed from a tiny pool of talent with previous ministerial experience; and of inbred lifelong career patterns and shared experience of past failure.

A politically neutral Civil Service

A civil servant was required to be politically neutral—not favouring any political party. Yet he was required to develop and further policies which essentially were statements about a government's objectives and values. Policy, events, political messages and public debate were all part of a single behaviour-changing process and the components could not be separated out. Political neutrality was inconsistent with the job.

For radical remedies to a country's problems it was necessary to have a radical government and radically-minded officials. But the nature of the officials' job—serving governments of all complexions—prevented them from being radical.

Prescriptions

The present system of career politicians and career officials had failed the country in the past and was likely to fail in the future. Sir John suggested some changes.

Briefly his suggestions were that:

- substantially more financial support should be given to the political parties at the expense of the Civil Service;
- a large number of senior civil servants—10 to 20 per department—should be replaced by politically appointed officials on contract;

- such outsiders might initially serve with a party in opposition which could thus (with taxpayer support) maintain a shadow team of officials who would take government office if and when that party came into power;
- a small new department incorporating the CPRS, partly staffed from outside and possibly emerging as a 'reconstructed Cabinet Office', should develop and oversee the government's total strategy—integrating policy and politics.

The reply from Sir Douglas Wass

Sir Douglas Wass took the opportunity of his lecture on 2 December 1982 under the auspices of the Royal Institute of Public Administration* to comment on Sir John's suggestion for the replacement of senior civil servants by political appointees. He dealt also with questions of efficiency, accountability, industrial relations, privilege, motivation and morale.

Generally, Sir Douglas acknowledged that there was considerable public anxiety about the Civil Service, that there might be indications that the Service had been slow to adapt to changing circumstances and that some searching self-criticism was called for.

There had been changes in the organisation of the Service, in recruitment and in its attitude to training and to the need for professionalism in its handling of specialist problems. On the other hand industrial relations had become strained. The circumstances surrounding the 1968 Fulton Report demonstrated how difficult it was to bring about structural and behavioural reform; but for the Service to survive in its present form it was of the utmost importance that it be responsive and sensitive to informed public opinion. His talk was to deal with what society today expected from its public service, the extent to which it got what it wanted and at the factors which inhibited as well as those which pointed to change.

Sir Douglas said that his talk would be about the Service as a whole, in its offices, laboratories and industrial establishments and not just the two or three thousand senior staff at the peak of the administrative pyramid. This Service was structured on a departmental basis and each department had a high degree of constitutional independence. The centre, that is the Treasury and the Management and Personnel Office, had only limited powers over departments, and much change in the field of management, of behaviour and of custom could be wrought only by persuasion and example.

*'The Public Service in Modern Society' a lecture by Sir D Wass to the Royal Institute of Public Administration, 2 December 1982, reprinted in *Public Administration*. Spring, 1983, pp 7–20.

Efficiency

The subject of efficiency in the Civil Service had never been wholly absent from the minds of our predecessors and was now an important focus for scrutiny. One of the principal objectives defined in the Northcote-Trevelyan report referred to the provision of 'a thoroughly efficient class of men'*; and the 1920 constitution of the National Whitley Council referred specifically to efficiency as one of its objectives. More recently the concern with efficiency had been illustrated by the use of O&M techniques, of operations research, of staff inspection and of new technology (the British government was believed to be the largest user of computers in Western Europe).

Efficiency was not always synonymous with cutting costs: the effect of economies on output was also important. It was a matter of political judgement whether costs saved by lowering the standards of service were worth the loss of output.

The search for efficiency would sometimes bring us up against constraints imposed by Parliament or of equity in the state's treatment of the citizen. Parliament paid close attention to the detail of how public money was spent but the principles underlying this approach might have to be modified if a combination of economy and delegation led to a measure of rough justice in administration.

Nevertheless, Sir Douglas believed that the public service must seek efficiency as our forbears sought accuracy. The consequences for training and for selecting people for promotion were being enthusiastically accepted by the Service today.

Accountability

There was also considerable public concern about the accountability of public servants, especially senior officials and staff responsible for policy. Such concern had often manifested itself since the end of the War as in the Crichel Down affair and the case of the Crown Agents' financial losses. The public felt uneasy about the lack of opportunities for requiring public servants to account for their stewardship.

It was necessary above all to be clear about the constitutional thread of accountability. Public servants functioned as part of the Crown, and the exercise of their responsibilities might be questioned by Parliament. Thus the accountability of public officials was indirectly to Parliament, and Ministers were the interface between the Crown and Parliament. Ministers could not, however, be aware of all the details of the work of their departments.

**Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service.* C.1713, by S H Northcote and C E Trevelyan, 1854, Summary of Recommendations No 1.

It was now unusual for Parliament to expect a Minister to resign over some relatively detailed failure of his department, but it followed logically from this that Parliament would want to concern itself directly with the point in the Minister's department where detailed responsibility lay. This would establish a new relationship between the official and Parliament, alter the unique responsibility of the Minister and add an important new public dimension to the status and role of the official.

There had been several developments in this direction—the examination by the Public Accounts Committee of senior officials over the expenditure of money, the investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner of cases of maladministration by civil servants, the public scrutiny of the conduct of senior officials by *ad hoc* tribunals and committees of enquiry, and the public examination by Departmental Select Committees of official witnesses on matters of public and parliamentary interest. These developments were likely to lead to more opportunities for the public to satisfy itself that officials behaved in a responsible manner.

There was however one area where Sir Douglas had a serious anxiety about the public accountability of officials—the domain of policy advice. To deprive the subjective or evaluative exchanges between Ministers and officials of confidentiality would damage the quality of those exchanges and the polititical neutrality of the Civil Service as officials became identified with a particular policy stance. In self defence, officials might be tempted to temper their advice and err on the side of caution. Ministers would be embarrassed by the disclosure of official advice which they had rejected or qualified. But if such advice remained confidential the Service must adopt rigorous standards of accountability with regular monitoring of performance and internal examination of the acts and advice of its members.

Politicisation of the Service

Sir Douglas then turned directly to the proposals of Sir John Hoskyns for the replacement of some senior officials by political appointees; and to the recent Labour Party proposal that junior Ministers and special advisers should take on functions now normally the responsibility of civil servants.

There had been varying use of special advisers since the first World War. Their numbers had been tightly controlled by the Prime Minister of the day up to a maximum of between 20 and 30 during the last Administration.

It had been suggested, said Sir Douglas, that civil servants, as politically neutral officials, had an essentially passive response to radical policies and would only implement them if under constant detailed political direction. The suggested changes had a number of implications: if senior posts were no longer filled by career officials, then Ministers would lose much of a department's collective and historical knowledge; young men and women

of ability would not be attracted if the senior posts were likely to be denied to them; and there would be a major problem over business appointments when political advisers and managers left the Service on a change of administration.

Ministers rightly wanted the policies on which they were elected to be pursued rigorously and effectively. But the charge that civil servants were negative or questioning when they responded to a ministerial initiative overlooked the fact that it was the duty of officials to ensure that Ministers were fully seized of the obstacles, the pitfalls and the dangers of their initiatives. No civil servant ever wanted to hear his Minister fairly complain 'Why was I not told?'. Moreover change often involved the use of expensive resources, and ministerial enthusiasm had to be brought face to face with the limits on public expenditure. The politically uncommitted Civil Service could evaluate all those factors with the objectivity that might sometimes escape the political enthusiast. This did not imply any lack of commitment.

Sir Douglas believed the career civil servant to be a person conscientiously and indeed enthusiastically seeking to further the interests of his Minister and who saw it very much as his role to initiate and develop ideas within the contextual framework set by the government of the day.

Ministers in charge of departments were grossly overworked. If, as it was sometimes argued, they consequently could not supervise administrators properly, a range of solutions was possible: to delegate more powers to junior Ministers or to appoint more of them, or to appoint more specialist advisers to work with senior officials and argue through the merits of the advice being prepared.

Industrial relations

Sir Douglas then turned to the question of industrial relations in the Service. He noted that the 1968 Fulton Report* had commended the then high morale of the staff and the fact that industrial disputes were rare in the Civil Service which, the Report said, owed a great deal to the universal acceptance of the principle of joint consultation. There had, however, been a distinct change in the past 15 years: following service-wide industrial action in 1973 there had been several major disputes. The public, however, had a presumption that civil servants should not strike regardless of the effect or lack of effect on them.

He believed that the Whitley system embodied the right approach and thought that the willingness of civil servants 20 years ago to rely on a measure of independent machinery and on public opinion as the best safeguards of their rights and interests had much to commend it. Civil

*_The Civil Service_. Report of the Committee chaired by Lord Fulton, Cmnd. 3638, HMSO, 1968.

servants should accept the verdict of society. But equally society should accept that if public servants were to forego the use of the bargaining strength of their trade unions, they needed reassurance that their forbearance would not be exploited.

Civil servants were widely believed to be privileged, for instance in job security and pay. Public servants needed to recognise this and the widespread view that it was unethical for them to strike. But if they believed that the treatment they had received had been positively unfair it might become very difficult for the leaders of their unions to restrain their members from expressing protest through industrial action.

Privilege

Sir Douglas suggested that some privileges enjoyed by civil servants might be thought of as the *quid pro quo* for moderation and forbearance in the pursuit of union objectives. These were mainly the determination of civil service pay, and particularly the use of comparability, the index linking of civil service pensions and the job security of public servants. The onset of recession induced by the first oil crisis of 1973 and the high rate of inflation had focused public attention on them. In these areas, however, the degree of preference enjoyed by public servants had been greatly overestimated.

First, whatever the inadequacies of the pay research system, it did not over time result in civil service pay advancing more rapidly than the pay of broadly similar employees in the private sector. Sir Douglas hoped that there might emerge from the consideration of the Megaw Report* a system which would free pay bargaining from the strife of recent years. He pleaded for both sides to seek a durable and harmonious settlement.

It was understandable that members of private pension schemes, which had been unable to make provision for preserving their real value whatever the rate of inflation, should feel that the public service had an uncovenanted and unjustified benefit. But civil servants formed a small minority of those enjoying this provision; the public services were increasingly being called upon to pay higher contributions deducted from their salaries for the additional cost of index linking; and pension fund managers could now invest their funds in index-linked gilt-edged securities so as to give a large measure of inflation proofing to their members.

Lastly, job security was bound up with the Government's objectives of reducing the size of the public services. Civil service manpower had been reduced by about ten per cent since 1979, and although this reduction was comparable in scale to that made in the service industries generally, the demands made of the Service had not fallen commensurately. The civil service unions had not obstructed this process of reducing numbers.

**Inquiry into Civil Service Pay*. Cmnd. 8590, Chairman: Sir John Megaw, HMSO, 1982.

Motivation and morale

Sir Douglas then turned to the conditions which must be satisfied if the Civil Service was to be able to give of its best to society. He said that the modern public service in this country began life as a deeply moral concept. The idea of public service still described what people expected the service to be, had great significance for young people and motivated staff. The public could, as a consequence, expect officials to be more concerned about public interest than about any personal advantage or personal profit that might derive from their actions; there was a co-operative spirit in departments which was not found so evidently outside the public services; and there was a commitment to high standards of fairness and equity between all citizens. These qualities did, of course, have their corollary: a concern for accuracy at the expense of cost awareness; a lack of the ambition which gave a cutting edge to the pursuit of private interest; and more than a passing hint that the most important ingredient to a good administrative decision was common sense—something which could lead sometimes to rank unprofessionalism. But in his view, the positive assets described were ones which society should value highly. They carried with them other qualities such as commitment and incorruptibility. And they contrasted impressively with the performance of the public services in many other countries where such matters as dedication and honesty were less highly regarded in practice.

The sense of public service was closely allied with that of morale; and Sir Douglas asked whether there was a danger that it was being eroded. Morale was low through a sense of loss of public esteem. To the extent that this had been lost due to shortcomings on the part of the Service, the remedy lay in the hands of the Service itself. But there had been a flood of criticism in recent years that the Service was a burden on society, parasitic in nature rather than part of the organic structure, the advocate of outdated values in the middle ground and an obstruction to radical change. No institution subjected to criticism of this nature could be expected to maintain its self-esteem and morale.

The charge of parasitism was wholly misconceived. Some areas of the Service contributed directly to the output of tradable goods and showed a profit. But such activities as the payment of social benefits, the maintenance of the prison service, even the collection of taxes were among the essential overheads of society. They were as necessary to those in the business of the production of tradable goods as the direct overheads within those units of production themselves, for example, the accounts branch, the personnel officer and the research and development department. The distinction between those activities in society which 'created wealth' and those which were ancillary to that creation was a dubious and dangerous one. A modern integrated society needed the

services which the public sector could provide as much as those of the private sector. The interdependence was complete.

Parallel to this was a concern in the Service about maintenance of standards. The Service was most jealous of its long tradition of probity and integrity in ensuring fair and equal treatment of citizens in their dealings with the state; and this contributed to the maintenance of morale. Some of the changes wanted by society could lead to a diminution in these values. But the Civil Service's innate preference for equity and fairness in the way public administration functioned must not be allowed to take precedence over what society wanted. Sir Douglas reiterated that the Civil Service must above all be responsive to the needs of government and the wishes of Parliament.

Machinery of Government Changes in 1982

P C Stokes and T R M Simon

Peter Stokes is an Executive Officer and Toby Simon a Principal in the Machinery of Government Division of the Management and Personnel Office.

The allocation of Ministers' responsibilities

The Prime Minister announced by Written Answer on 11 March 1982 that responsibility for the European Community Common Agricultural Policy regimes for tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp and silkworms would be transferred from the Secretary of State for Industry to the Agriculture Ministers—the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in England and the respective Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State for Industry still has general policy responsibility for these commodities while the Agriculture Ministers act as the sponsors of any United Kingdom producers. The transfer took effect from 5 March 1982. The Prime Minister similarly announced on 7 April 1982 that responsibility for the Government Hospitality Fund had passed from the Minister for the Civil Service to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, with effect from 1 April. Responsibility for issuing certificates to non-profit making bodies giving non-commercial film shows was transferred from the Commissioners of Customs and Excise to the Home Secretary. These certificates give exemption from local authority licensing and safety requirements under section 5 of the Cinematograph Act 1952. The transfer was effected by Schedule 1 to the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982 which came into operation on 13 October 1982.

Functional changes

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Departments were reorganised. On 1 April the control functions of the Departments of Finance and the Civil Service were merged under the Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1982*, to form the new Department of Finance and Personnel. This Order also transferred certain administrative functions from the two original departments to other

*The Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1982. No 338 (NI 6), HMSO, 1982.

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Northern Ireland Departments. A second Order, the Departments (No 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982*, formed the Department of Economic Development through the merger of the Departments of Manpower Services and of Commerce on 6 September 1982. Advice on the formulation and implementation of the new department's industrial development policy, both generally and in specific cases, is provided by the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland, a new executive non-departmental public body established on 1 September by the Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982** (see first paragraph on page 137.

The Probation Board (Northern Ireland) Order 1982*** transferred responsibility for the regulation of the Probation Service to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. Members of the Service ceased to be Northern Ireland civil servants from 1 December 1982.

On 1 April 1982 responsibility for the two Stationery Office production units (binderies), located on the premises of the British Library and the National Library of Scotland was transferred to these libraries from Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Also from 1 April 1982 the staff of the India Office Library and Records, a department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, transferred to the British Library. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, however, continues to have responsibility for the printed books, documents and objects which include the records of the East India Company and the India Office. They will be held on trust by the British Library Board.

Size and composition of the Government

On 6 April 1982 the Prime Minister announced several ministerial changes, some of which affected the structure of the ministerial team. The Paymaster General became additionally Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The holder of these posts continued to receive no ministerial salary. The Leader of the House of Lords assumed the office of Lord Privy Seal which had previously been held by a Minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The holder of these posts is also in charge of the Management and Personnel Office on a day-to-day basis. A fourth Minister of State was appointed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a second Parliamentary Under Secretary of State post was added to the Department of Transport in lieu of such a post in the Department of Trade.

*_The Departments (No 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982._ No 846 (NI 11), HMSO, 1982.
**_The Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982._ No 1083 (NI 15), HMSO, 1982.
***_The Probation Board (Northern Ireland) Order 1982._ No 713 (NI 10), HMSO, 1982.

Following the ministerial changes announced on 6 January 1983 the number of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State posts in the Home Office rose by one to two, and dropped from four to three in the Department of the Environment.

The total number of Ministers, including Whips, remained constant at 106 during 1982, as did the size of the Cabinet at 22.

Non-departmental public bodies

In March 1983 the Management and Personnel Office issued *Public Bodies 1982**. This book updates and extends the information previously published in the series *Non-Departmental Public Bodies: Facts and Figures.* As before, distinction is made between the three main types of body; executive, advisory and tribunal. Coverage has been extended to take in the nationalised industries and, for the first time, board appointments made to each body or industry.

During the year twenty-two executive bodies were wound up. These abolitions include: thirteen Industrial Training Boards and one Committee; the Bracknell Development Corporation; and the Community Water Research Project. Additional savings were made when the office of the Assessor of Public Undertakings was absorbed into the Scottish Office and when government support was withdrawn from the National Electronic Council, the National Building Agency and the Underwater Training Centre. Savings from these reductions in executive bodies are expected to reach £57m in a full year.

Twenty-two advisory bodies were also wound up during 1982. A further five were amalgamated to form two new bodies: the Manpower Advisory Council was formed from the merger of the Northern Ireland Training Council, the Youth Careers Guidance Committee and the Youth Opportunities Programme Monitoring Committee; and the Scottish Community Education Council resulted from the merger of the Scottish Community Education Centre and the Scottish Council for Community Education. These reductions in advisory bodies should result in savings approaching £310,000 in a full year.

Two of the seven Milk and Dairies Tribunals were also wound up during the year.

In April 1982 part of the Ministry of Defence, the British Forces Broadcasting Corporation, was hived off and merged with an existing executive non-departmental public body, the Services Kinema Corporation, to form a new one, the Services Sound and Vision Corporation. The Countryside Commission became independent from the Department of the Environment in April 1982.

**Public Bodies 1982.* HMSO, 1983.

As already stated, a new executive body, the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland was established in September 1982. It replaces the Northern Ireland Development Agency, which although no longer operational will not be formally abolished until 1983, and the Industries Development Advisory Committee which has been abolished.

On 24 February 1982 the Committee of Inquiry into the Functions and Powers of the Islands Councils in Scotland was set up.

Privatisation and hiving-off

By early 1983 all but two of British Rail's remaining hotels had been transferred to the private sector. Amersham International plc, whose shares were previously held by the Secretary of State for Energy, was disposed of in February 1982 for £63.3 million.

The assets of the Hydraulics Research Station, along with its staff on secondment, were transferred in April 1982 to the Hydraulics Research Station Ltd, a research association with the status of a company limited by guarantee. Also in April 1982 the Royal Hospital, Chelsea was hived-off from the Ministry of Defence, its established staff then ceasing to be members of the Home Civil Service.

Part II of the Oil and Gas (Enterprises) Act 1982 empowers the British Gas Corporation to dispose of any part of the Corporation or its subsidiaries. The Act also allows for the use by others of the Corporation's pipelines and for others to produce a gas supply.

Part I of the Transport Act 1982 empowers the National Bus Company to dispose of shares or property in its subsidiaries. Part II of the Act empowers the Secretary of State to authorise any person to conduct Heavy Goods Vehicle and Passenger Service Vehicle testing and agreement has been reached in principle to transfer this function to Lloyds Register Vehicle Testing Authority. In February 1982 the Secretary of State for Transport completed the sale of the National Freight Company Limited to the National Freight Consortium plc, formed by the managers, employees and pensioners of the NFC.

On 31 December 1982 the British Transport Docks Board was reconstituted as Associated British Ports and Associated British Ports Holdings became its parent company (under an Order made under Section 5 of the Transport Act 1981) in preparation for an intended offer for sale of 49 per cent of the shares in the holding company.

The Secretary of State for Energy disposed of 51 per cent of the shares of Britoil plc, a former subsidiary of the British National Oil Corporation, in November 1982.

The National Maritime Institute was privatised on 1 October 1982 and its staff and assets transferred to the National Maritime Institute Limited.

Abstract of Technical Report

CCTA Technical Note No 1907—Private viewdata systems by A Hosie, HM Treasury (Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency).

This Note outlines the concept of viewdata and the facilities available on private viewdata systems. It describes classes of user on a viewdata system as well as the classes of service which can be provided by viewdata.

The Note states that most private viewdata systems are modular in design, having a basic core of software and that many of the following facilities are provided as changeable options: Viewdata Creation, Bulk Formatters, Message Systems and Language Interfaces.

A summary of private viewdata systems referred to in this Note is included as an Appendix.

Copies are available from:

HM Treasury
Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency
Publications and Information Branch
Riverwalk House
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Telephone 01-211 7754 or GTN 211 7754

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Civil Service College Courses and Seminars

The Civil Service College runs a wide range of courses and seminars, many of which are open to both civil servants and people outside government. A small selection of the courses due to be held in September and October 1983 is shown below together with a contact point for further information.

Course Title	*Dates*
Government statistics: recent developments and future directions	Series of one-day seminars; first to be held on 21 September 1983
Analysing performance against objectives: a module of the Senior Administrators Finance Course	26–28 September 1983
Information technology: can IT help statistics?	September–October 1983
Statistical methods for the administrator	19–21 October 1983

Contact Mrs Irene Somerville, Civil Service College, Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 0QE
Telephone: Ascot (0990) 23444 ext. 278 or GTN 2092 278

Organisational change	19–23 September 1983
The effective manager	26–30 September 1983
Consultants and advisers	27 September–7 October 1983
Introduction to industrial relations for senior staff	17–19 October 1983
The effective manager II	24–28 October 1983
Industrial relations for middle managers	31 October–4 November 1983

Contact Mrs E M Blaydon, Civil Service College
Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 0QE
Telephone: Ascot (0990) 23444 ext. 352 or GTN 2092 352

Relations with the public	19–23 September 1983
Managing cutbacks	26–28 September 1983
Law and the administrator	3–7 October 1983
Outline of central government	3–7 October 1983
One day courses in administrative procedures:	
– Parliamentary Questions	14 October 1983
– Legislation	18 October 1983
International relations and UK interests	17–28 October 1983
Administration course for specialists (SPATS)	24 October–2 December 1983
Efficiency in government	31 October–4 November 1983

Contact Mrs Muriel Ward, Civil Service College
Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 0QE
Telephone: Ascot (0990) 23444 ext. 296 or GTN 2092 296

Assignment skills	5–16 September 1983 3–14 October 1983
Appreciation of O&M for managers	19–23 September 1983
Forms design for managers	27–28 September 1983

Contact Mr David Crampton, Civil Service College
11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB
Telephone: 01-834 6644 ext. 225 or GTN 2803 225

New Publications on the Civil Service

This is a list of the documents issued recently by the Management and Personnel Office on management in the Civil Service. These items may be examined in the *Central Management Library, Management and Personnel Office, Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AZ,* and copies may be ordered from the same address. HMSO publications may be ordered from *PO Box 569, London SE1 9NH,* from any Government Bookshop, or through any bookseller.

Administrative forms in government: progress report to the Prime Minister
by D W Overington and others
1983; 7 pages; £3.00

Careers and career management in the scientific civil service: a guide for science group staff
1983; 24 pages; gratis

Civil Service Appeal Board Annual report 1982
1983; 10 pages; gratis

The civil service year book 1983
HMSO; 1983; 325 pages; £12.00
ISBN 0 11 630452 9

Ethnic monitoring in the civil service: a survey in Leeds Vol 2
HMSO; 1983; 26 pages; £1.50
ISBN 0 11 630467 7

InDePendent
1983; 54 pages; gratis

List of ministerial responsibilities: February 1983
1983; 18 pages; gratis

Public bodies 1982
HMSO; 1983; 77 pages; £8.75
ISBN 0 11 630464 2

Report of the Joint Survey Service Review Steering Committee
Chairman: M B Sloman
1982; 44 pages; gratis

Review of running costs: report to the Prime Minister
by J S Cassels
1983; 44 pages; £2.50
ISBN 0 7115 0052 5

A student's guide to day release for civil servants under 18: England and Wales
1983; 22 pages; gratis

Civil Service College

Government finance and accounts: background notes
by G C Beard
1982; 80 pages; gratis

A selection of courses and seminars: spring term January-Easter 1983
1983; 1 folded sheet; gratis

A selection of courses for computer systems managers, users and functional specialists
1983; loose-leaf; gratis

Twelfth annual report
1983; 67 pages; gratis

Civil Service Commission

An introduction to selection interviewing
by Dr E Anstey
HMSO; rev ed 1983; 39 pages; £3.30

Printed in England for Her Majesty's Stationery Office by Adams Bros. & Shardlow Ltd., Leicester
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Contributions and correspondence are welcomed; they should be addressed to the editor at the Management and Personnel Office, Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AZ. Manuscripts should preferably be clearly typed on single sides of A4 paper with double spacing and wide margins. Photographs should be in black and white with a glossy finish and free from creases and marks. Civil Service contributors should first obtain the approval of their departments for publication.

Abstracts of technical articles and reports by civil servants should include:

(1) Title or subject
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